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September '95

Carl Allen
Always Swinging

JON FISHMAN
Of Phish

Alvino Bennett

Abbruzzese, Bowman, Young, and more—On Bouncing Back!

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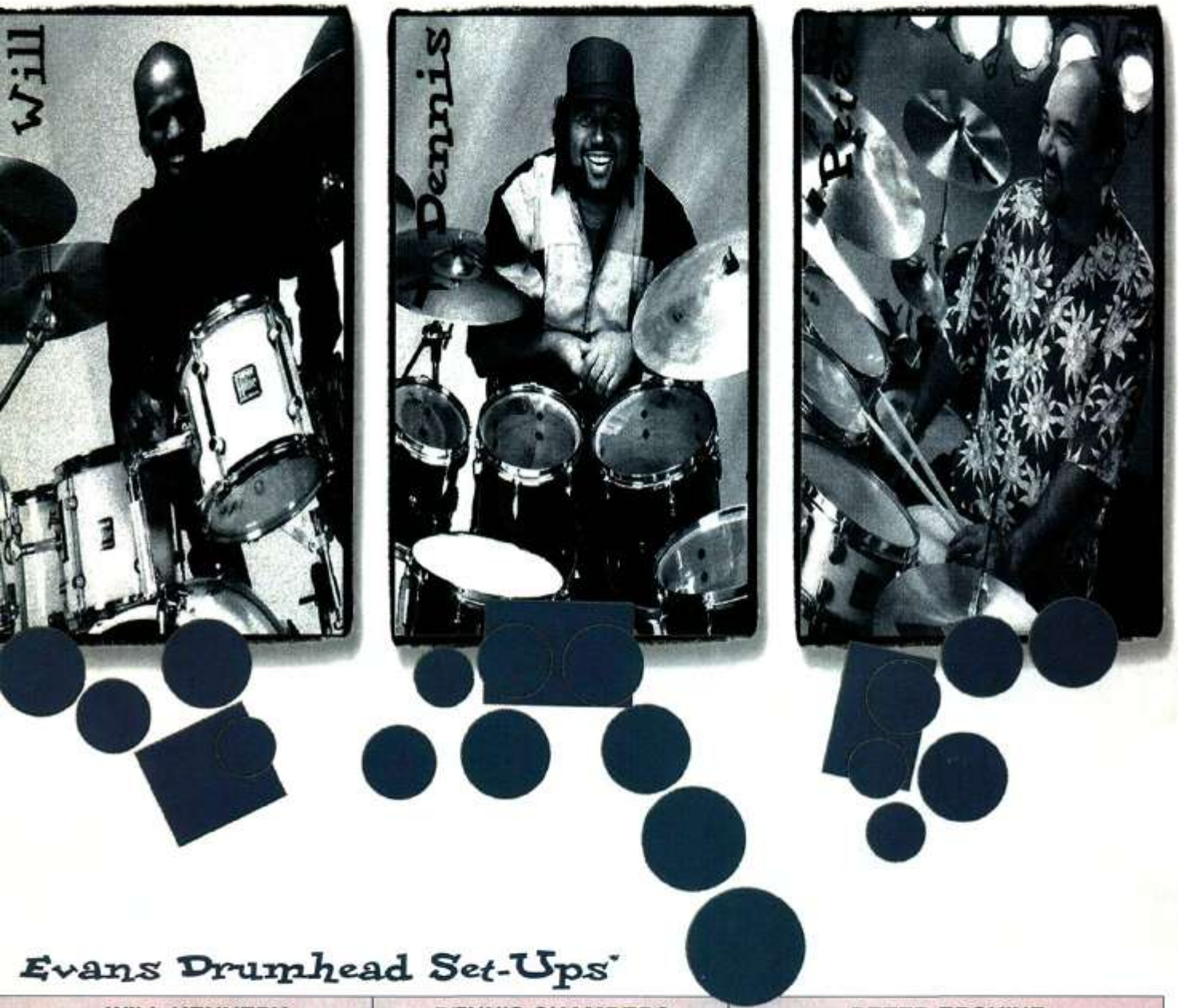

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CARL ALLEN

Supreme sideman? Prolific producer? Marketing maven? Whether backing greats like Freddie Hubbard and Jackie McLean with unstoppable imagination, or writing, performing, and producing his own eclectic music, *or* tackling the business side of music, Carl Allen refuses to be tied down.

• ***Ken Micallef*** **38**

JON "FISH" FISHMAN

Getting a handle on the slippery style of Phish may be an exercise in futility, but that hasn't kept millions of fans across the country from being hooked. Drummer Jon Fishman navigates the band's unpredictable musical waters by blending ancient drumming wisdom with unique and personal exercises.

• ***William F. Miller*** **56**

ALVINO BENNETT

Have groove, will travel...*a lot.* LTD, Kenny Loggins, Stevie Wonder, Chaka Khan, Sheena Easton, Bryan Ferry—these are but a few of the artists who have gladly exploited Alvino Bennett's rock-solid feel.

• ***Robyn Flans*** **76**

LOSING YOUR GIG AND BOUNCING BACK

We drummers generally avoid the topic of being fired, but maybe hiding from the ax conceals its potentially positive aspects. Discover how the former drummers of Pearl Jam, Slayer, Counting Crows, and others transcended the pain and found freedom in a pink slip.

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Cover photo by Ebet Roberts

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A New Home

In the September '94 issue, I made mention in this column of our plans for a new *Modern Drummer* office building. Back then, architectural designs were being finalized, and the land excavation process was in its very earliest stages. We celebrated the official groundbreaking in that same issue.

Well, here it is one year later (September '95 issue), and I'm happy to announce that the project has been completed and we have finally moved into our new home. Clearly, the building process was a laborious, time-consuming, and at times mind-numbing experience, but now that we're settled in, there's no question that it was all well worth the effort.

Our new office remains in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, just two minutes from our previous home in another section of town. For those unfamiliar with the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area, we're roughly fifteen miles west of New York City. Our new 8,500-square-foot complex is all on *one* level, on a two-acre parcel in a very quiet area of town. Our previous layout involved three separate floors, so needless to say, we're delighted that the days of schlepping up and down three flights of stairs are finally over!

All *MD* staffers now have comfortable, spacious offices. We even included a few additional ones to account for new people as we need them in the years to come. This is our fourth home in twenty years, so we were careful to include everything we felt we'd need in the hopes that we won't have to do this again. Along with fourteen individual offices, we now have a pleasant reception area, a full-sized shipping and receiving room, a complete research library, a computer room, a photography studio, a product-testing area, a staff lounge, and a good-sized conference room. The new facility should sufficiently handle all of our needs under one roof for many years to come.

Most importantly, our new office layout will help us gain a great deal in terms of efficiency and productivity. Along with the continued publication of *Modern Drummer, Drum Business,* and educational items for drummers channeled through our Book Division, we now have ample room to accomodate the staff we'll need for the wealth of new projects we've planned for the future.

Please note that our new address for editorial, advertising, and administrative matters is **12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, New Jersey 07009.** Our phone and fax numbers have not changed. Finally, I'd like to extend an invitation to anyone who may be passing through our area to feel free to stop by and pay us a visit. One of our staffers would be happy to give you the tour, and I'd enjoy meeting with you.

MODERN DRUMMER

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

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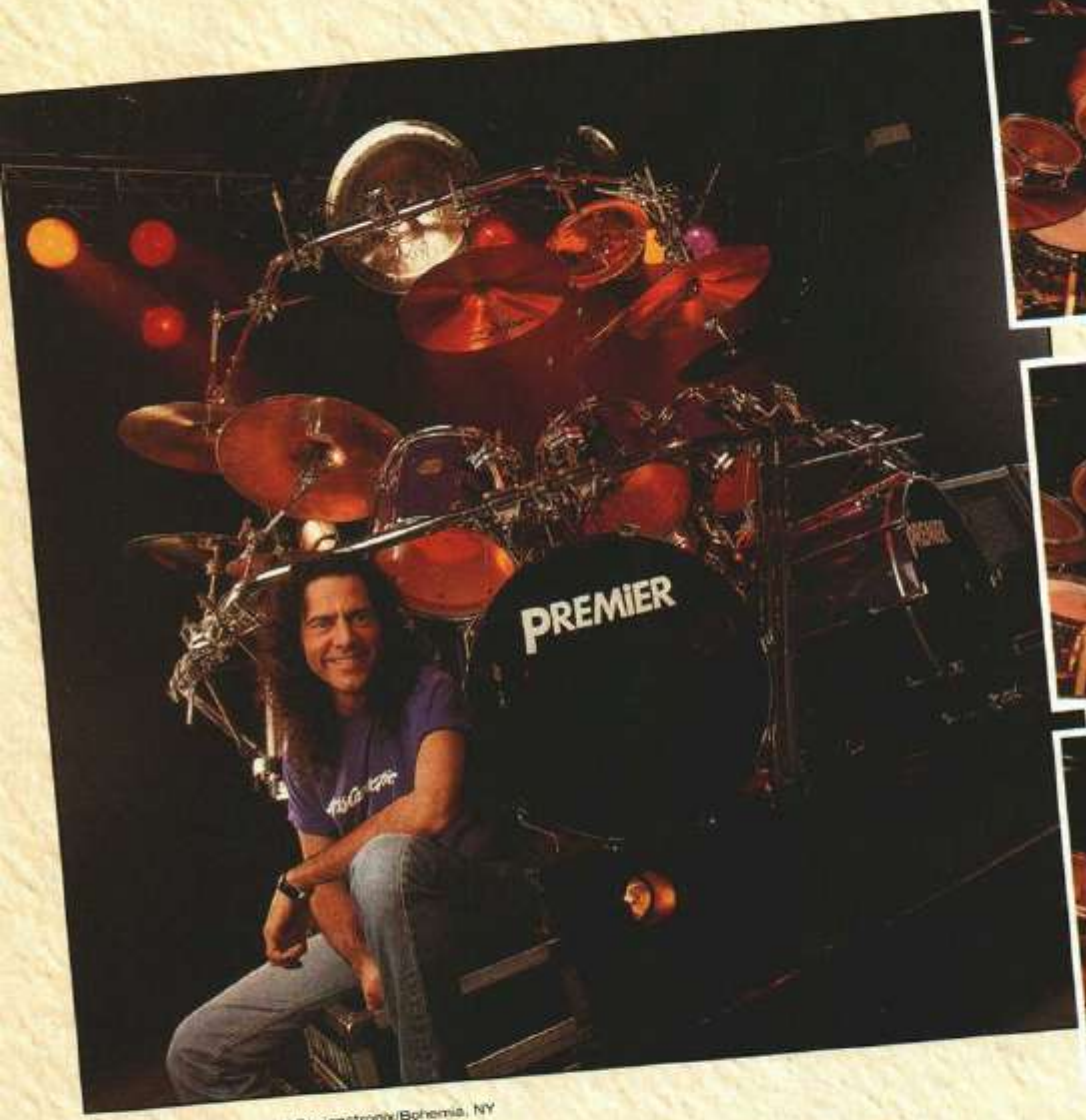
Profile: Joe Franco



Studio Facilities courtesy of Designatronix/Bohemia, NY

PERSONAL DATA:

Joe Franco

BORN: New York City

CURRENT PROJECTS:

- Currently touring with "Widowmaker" in support of their second album "Standby for Pain".
- Played drums and wrote songs for a new instrumental album "Mojo Bros." with Al Pitrelli and TM Stevens.
- Writing, playing and producing music for various film and TV commercial projects.

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JACK DEJOHNETTE

Thanks for the insightful article on Jack DeJohnette by Rick Mattingly. I particularly liked the way Rick used examples of Jack's vast body of recorded work to illustrate the astonishing versatility of this inspiring musician. Mattingly also astutely points out that while Jack can be very busy and aggressive when accompanying others, he is always playing more *with* than behind them—a crucial distinction. While it's true that a drummer's primary role is to support in a tasteful fashion, a musical drummer—such as Jack—can paint emotions and pictures *and* accompany soloists at the same time. Thanks for this chance to hear more about one of my musical mentors, and for the ongoing variety of support and information you provide us all.

Jay Harris
Portland, OR

DEATH METAL: PRO...

Thanks for the articles on such heavy metal drummers as Paul Bostaph, John Tempesta, and most recently the "Drummers Of Death Metal." In the past it seems that metal drummers have been considered unworthy of praise or recognition of their musical abilities. I sincerely hope that this newfound recognition will continue, with such drummers as Chris Kontos of Machine Head, Danny Shuler of Biohazard, Dan Richardson of Pro-Pain, or John Dette, who recently replaced John Tempesta in Testament.

Jeff Hollen
Coral Springs, FL

...AND CON

Your magazine has a great influence on young people, and yet you cover drummers who worship Satan. Your "Drummers Of Death Metal" article made it seem cool to play with human bones, burn crosses, kill animals, and play 32nd and 64th notes as loud and tastelessly as possible. Can we now expect articles on prison drummers, serial murderer drummers, and rapist drummers?

I really don't care how fast these drummers play. The lifestyle they live and the influence they could have is just one more thing we don't need in society. Why do they have to worship the devil to be in your magazine? I guess it's cool nowadays.

J.N.
Dallas, TX

OWEN HALE

I enjoyed Owen Hale's story in your June issue. It was nice to see a guy admit that he learned virtually everything he knows by just listening to other great players—either to what they play or what they have to say. I also liked Owen's honest appraisal of both the good and bad aspects of studio and live playing. These successful pros are the guys we can learn the most from. Keep 'em coming.

Tom Taylor
Minneapolis, MN

ON THE OTHER OTHER HAND...

Editor's note: In the June '95 issue of MD *reader Adam Epstein wrote to complain about* MD's *recent coverage of drummers like Neil Peart, Buddy Rich, Scott Rockenfield, Daniel Humair, and Herlin Riley. His objection was that* MD *was not covering drummers like Tre Cool, Jon Fishman, and others from "any band that's really* modern." *Here's a selection of reader response to Adam's letter.*

You guys at *Modern Drummer* were gracious enough to publish [Adam Epstein's] letter and not personally address the nonsense it contained. I'm not. This guy was way out of line. You do an excellent job each month with articles on great drummers, young and old. You've introduced me to better musicians and to diverse styles of music. *MD* isn't a trendy magazine that interviews every here-one-day-gone-the-next imitation Nirvana. *MD* brings us stories on *real* drummers—who've worked, studied, and practiced their butts off to learn anything and everything about drumming so they could become the foremost in their profession. Each issue is written tremendously well, regardless of who's on the cover.

Michael Cozart
Colleyville, TX

On one hand I agree with Adam Epstein: I would love to see Jon Fishman featured. But hey, take it easy on Neil Peart. Every time he's been on *MD's* cover he's brought something new to the table. Reading his comments about the *Burning For Buddy* album was the next best thing to being in the studio. It was educational to read about how a handful of the best drummers alive (and a diverse group) approached the recording of a very important album.

Also, just because somebody has been drumming for many years doesn't make them un-modern. The perfect example of this is Jack DeJohnette—*MD's* cover artist in the June issue. He started revolutionizing the instrument twenty years ago, and he hasn't let up yet. I've been able to take something positive from every artist featured in *MD*—old, young, jazz, country, rock, metal, or whatever. Be patient; I'm sure Fishman and Tre Cool are coming.

Dan Martin
New York, NY

Maybe the title *is Modern Drummer,* but that has more than one meaning. The drummers of today will get their moments of glory when the time comes, and they'll *still* be modern if they're good enough. Show some respect for the drummers who have earned their keep. The guys at *MD* do a great job.

Douglas McClure
Belleville, PA

I've always felt that *MD* has been more than adequate at covering all the bases. While the drummers in what Adam labeled as "modern" bands are talented in their own right, I don't think *MD* could highlight *them* in every issue, either. Keep an open mind and learn from what is available. Discounting *MD* articles on the basis of "overblown styles," "artsy-fartsy rock,"

NOW ROBIN HITS BULLSEYE!

PAPYRUS

Robin DiMaggio,24, has created a spectacular name for himself ranging from studio work and touring to clinics and drum festivals. At the age of 17 he kicked of his career playing with Tracy Chapman. Since then he has worked with the likes of Paul McCartney, New Kids on the Block, Karen White, Chante More, El Debarge, Tony Braxton and Sexual Chocolate. Thanks to 11 years of Joe Porcaro's master teaching, today Robin is known for his street grooves and simplicity on playing the kit, which you can hear on most of today's biggest Rap productions. We're confident his career will continue taking him a long way. After all, being where he is and doing what he does, is proof he's doing something right. One thing is the sound of his cymbals: Meinl Raker - the feel is there.

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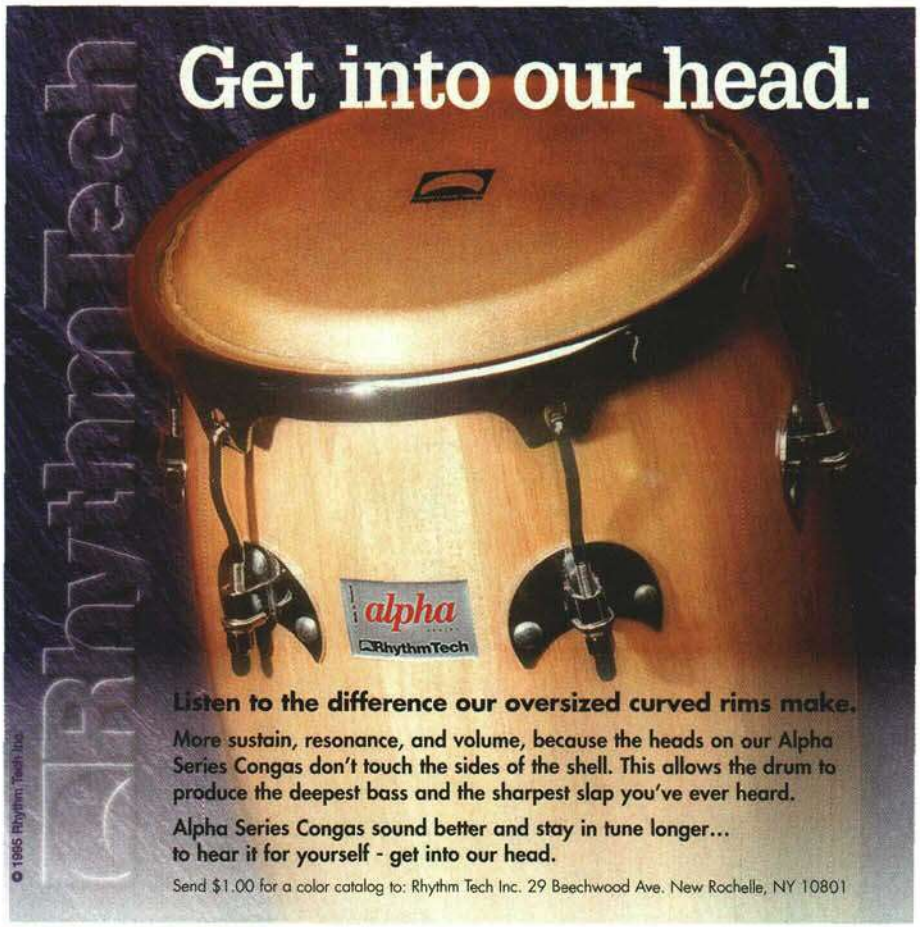
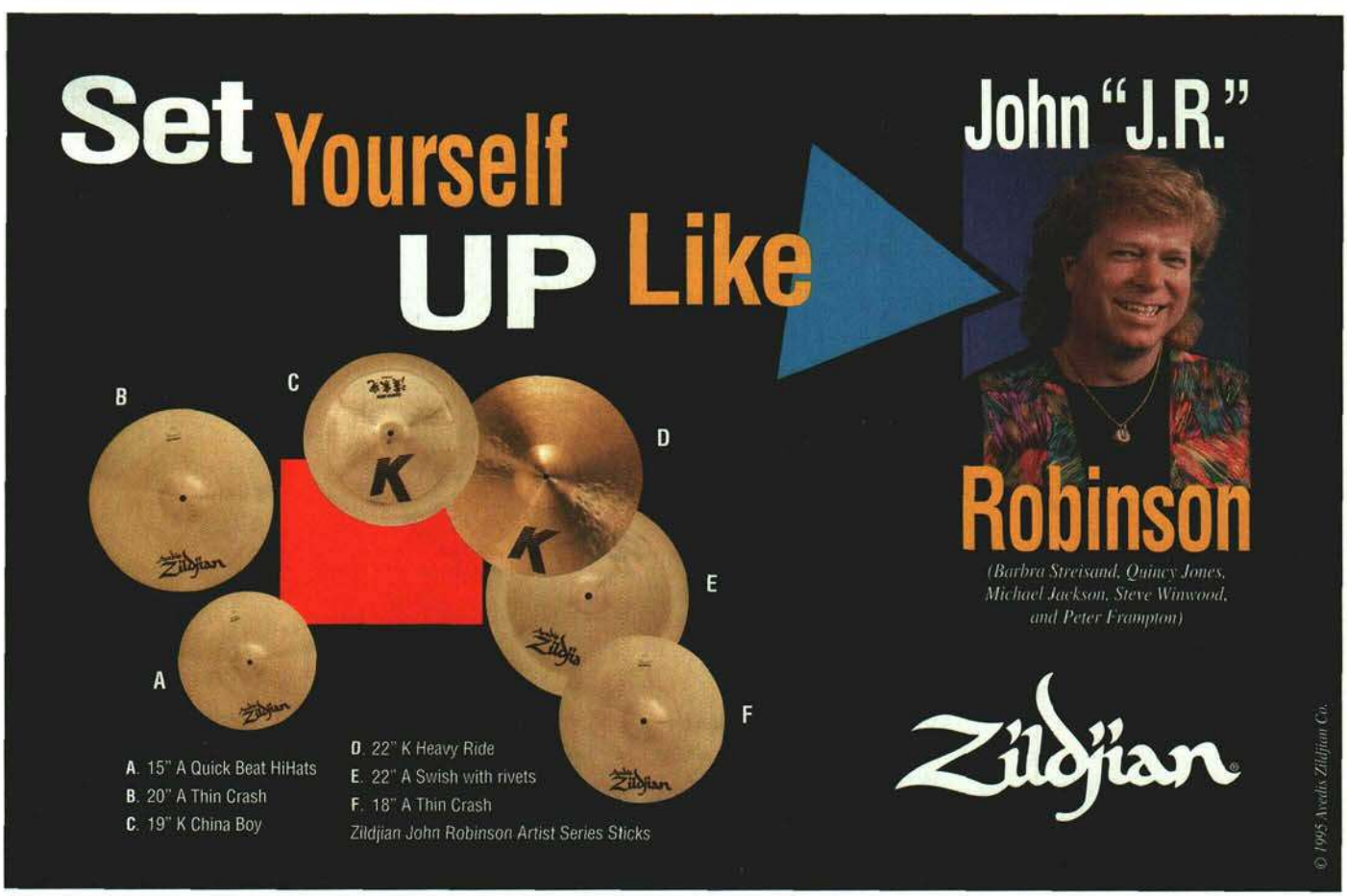


or "obscure jazz" definitely highlights one's own limitations. Let's work to eliminate these limitations and respect drumming for what it is in its purest form: music!

Ron French
Leonardtown, MD

I would much rather see *MD* live up to the "drummer" part of its title, so readers can obtain information about all percussionists old *and* new (as opposed to confining its articles to percussionists who are more modern—but sometimes less talented). I do not want *MD* to become a publication in which questions regarding flams or swing patterns are answered by: "Umm...what?" Continue to do exactly what you're doing. It is superb.

Matt Kelly
Eden Prairie, MN



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Terry Bozzio

After catching up with Terry Bozzio at a master class at Drums 'N Moore in Madison, Wisconsin, it's apparent that he's doing exactly what he loves to do. The class was limited to seventy-five people, so the feeling was intimate. There were no mic's, not even a sound system—just Terry and his drums. Forming a semi-circle around Terry, the audience of drummers hung on every word he spoke.

This may be a long way from playing 20,000-seat arenas, but Terry's rapport with the crowd showed that he's just as committed to sharing his passion for the drumming art form in a small setting. "We're doing thirteen dates in twenty-six days," Bozzio says. "My brother-in-law Chris is with me, and we've got a 14' truck. We're taking our time, with a three- to four-hour drive on show days and maybe eight hours on off days."

Citing the difficulties of working with a big record company, Terry has found the "do it yourself method more practical. "Record companies don't know what to do with me and my solo drumming," he says. "I know my audience, so I can get right to them. It's the most efficient way." Dealing with the major labels with his past bands like Missing Persons has also given Terry a different outlook on the business side of music. "When you sign a contract," Bozzio admits, "you end up having to pay the record company back recording and promotion fees. They also want some of your publishing rights, so you're left with very little. On my own, I can make the same money by selling one tenth as many CDs." Judging by the brisk sale of his discs, tapes, and T-shirts, Terry's found the right idea.

In September of 1993, Bozzio put on two sold-out shows at the Palace Theater in Hollywood. Encouraged by the success of these shows and a few select dates, he's now working on doing a solo

tour around the country, presenting his complete two-hour show. Before he has time for that, though, Terry will have to complete the tour he's currently on with Jeff Beck and Tony Hymas, which they're co-headlining with Carlos Santana.

Regarding his active and unique lifestyle, Terry urges, "If there's something in your heart you need to do, you should do it."

• Michael Bettine

Kevin Winard

For the past two years, Kevin Winard has been at the helm of the Captain & Tennille's live show. "It's a fun show to do," says Winard, "because we play all of the hits, and the crowds just love them. Plus, with Daryl [the Captain] on stage, you never know what's going to happen! I really have to keep my eyes on him because he does a lot of off-the-wall cues. This year there are plans to record a twenty-year-anniversary album.

"But the best part for me is when I go out with just Toni," Winard exclaims. "I perform with her across the country with symphonies and big bands. I enjoy the challenge of playing with a symphony. You have to breathe with the orchestra, yet keep them together. Also, dynamics play a major role." Kevin adds that he can be heard on Toni Tennille's recent big band release, *Things Are Swingin'*. "We recorded the entire sixteen tracks live in just two days! It was a great project."

When Winard is not on the road with the Tennilles, he often works with Brazilian artist Kleber Jorge. According to Kevin, "Jorge's music is fantastic. I have learned so much working with him, and because I play Latin and Brazilian percussion as well, it gives me the opportunity to enjoy the full spectrum of playing."

Also, when time permits, Winard sings in some of the jazz clubs in Santa Barbara. "I have plans to record an album of my own," he says, "so I have started to get back into songwriting again. I feel very fortunate that I'm able to be involved in so. many different musical genres. It keeps me open, and I feel like I'm constantly learning something new all of the time. And as long as that's happening, I'm happy!"

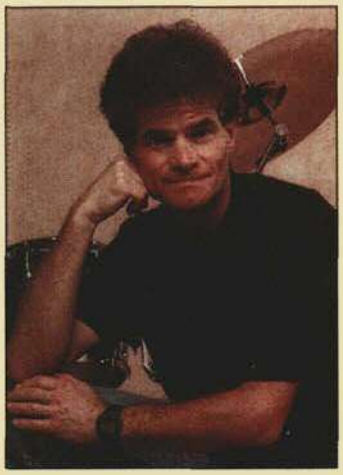
• Robyn Flans

Bob Gatzen

The sun never seems to set on drum designer Bob Gatzen. Besides his extensive work for Noble & Cooley and Evans, Bob finds the time to run a retail music store and a recording studio, write music (including three tunes on Dennis Chambers' *Getting Even* CD), release three drum videos, and even play drums on a CD by Mr. Spats.

Bob has also taken a big step in helping drummers with his video *Drum Tuning & Design,* on which his clear and concise manner takes the mystery out of this often frustrating subject. "It's about making the drums sound the best they can to inspire your playing," he says. "I'm taken aback by the response; the reviews have been great." Bob recently did a clinic at Berklee College and will be doing one at the PAS convention in Phoenix this November.

As popular as his recent video is, Gatzen has two earlier ones that have actually out-sold it. Unless you're a kid or a parent, though, you may never have seen them. But you can easily find one of them at J.C. Penny's, FAO Schwartz, or Toys R Us, since the video comes with a Noble & Cooley toy drumset. Noble & Cooley is the world's largest toy drum manufacturer, and as Bob explains, "Kids usually get drums for Christmas and whack away at them for a while, but then they end up in the trash a few weeks later. That's because the kids never learned anything on them. By including a video where I work with a nine-year-old, we've been able to reach both the kids and their parents. We teach them to hold the sticks and play a few basic rhythms. It gets them involved.



"I'm working on a project now," Gatzen adds, "that should be out in 1996 and that will really benefit the percussion industry. I feel it will be a significant design innovation for drums." After all he's gotten from music, it's encouraging to see someone like Bob Gatzen working so hard to give something back.

" Michael Bettine

Jack Platt

In 1992, Gene Krupa's estate expressed a desire to organize a Krupa Tribute Band. They wanted to turn the operation over to a drummer who could duplicate the Krupa style, but at the same time respect the interests of the Krupa family. Jack Platt, the long-time companion and protege of Gene Krupa, has proudly stepped into that role, and has re-created the great Krupa band.

Jack's connection with Krupa goes way back. "My father, Michael Platt, played saxophone with Krupa back in the 1920s in the pits of the Chicago theaters," Jack explains. "They lost contact long before Krupa gained fame playing with Benny Goodman." In 1956 Krupa was performing in Milwaukee, where the elder Platt went to see him. At that reunion he introduced his six-year-old son Jack to jazz via the Krupa quartet. Michael and Gene rekindled their friendship, after which Jack frequently visited Gene at his home in New York. "I studied with Gene, and I got to closely observe him in performance," Jack says. He learned the Krupa style, and the two remained close friends until Krupa passed away in 1973.

Platt, even has Krupa's gear. "I have two sets of Krupa's original Slingerland drums," he says. "These were gifts from Gene, and I pulled them out of storage for this project." Jack searched libraries for charts of the drum master's war-era hits, as well as other big band books. With the assistance of Gary Lindsey, dean of music at the University of Miami, Platt assembled a group of top-notch musicians who made their debut in July of 1994.

Today Platt has built a working organization that would make Krupa proud. In March they did a Canadian tour performing for sell-out crowds, with new bookings coming in steadily as they gain an enthusiastic following.

• Kathe Polizzi

News...

Gregg Bissonette recently completed the new Joe Satriani LP and recorded a couple of tracks for Andy Summers.

Earl Harvin is now working with Seal.

Richie Hayward on tour with Little Feat.

Scott Rockenfield on tour with Queensryche.

Eddie Bayers in the studio with Dolly Parton, Neal McCoy, Confederate Railroad, Alan Jackson, Aaron Neville, Martina McBride, Clay Walker, Wynonna, John Anderson, Lisa Brokop, Smoking Armadillos, Carlene Carter, Ricky Skaggs, Paul Overstreet, Charlie Daniels, and Davis Daniel.

Richard Bailey recently finished a tour with Des'ree. He's also been in the studio, recording new projects for George Benson and former Incognito lead vocalist Maysa Leak.

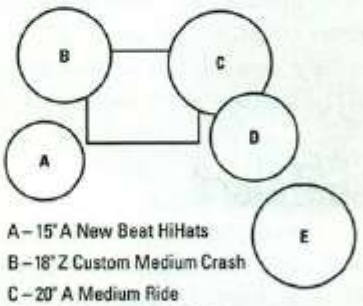
Before **Jack Irons** left Eleven to join Pearl Jam, he recorded seven tracks on their new disc, *Thunk.* **Matt Cameron** is on the other four. **(Greg Upchurch** is the new drummer in the band.)

MAKE THE L
SINGER
SCREAM LO

SOUNDGARDEN IS a seminal Seattle band whose sound challenges conventions and earplugs alike. And in the very eye of this sonic hurricane, you'll find drummer Matt Cameron, whose style underpins the band's bone-crunching power.

In addition to alternative tunings and odd time signatures, Matt relies upon a variety of Z Custom Crash cymbals from Zildjian.

They're loud. They're colorful. They're musical. And Z Customs now include Rides, Hi-Hats and China Boys. Which is a *good thing.*



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Bill Bruford

Q Throughout the past decade your concentration was in electronic percussion—particularly with the Earthworks project. With the new King Crimson release, as well as on *Symphonic Music Of Yes,* your interest seems to have reverted to acoustic percussion. This is somewhat surprising, since in the February 1989 issue of *MD* you saw your future being firmly entrenched in electronics. Was this choice an evolutionary change in your style, or was it simply a matter of what the music dictated?

Robert Palushek
Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada

A This is a good question—and I'm not sure I know the answer. Throughout the '80s there was terrific promise for the electronic drummer. It was a mountain that somebody had to climb, and I sort of volunteered. The Promised Land was the idea of being a hybrid drummer/keyboard player, being able to do all the things a keyboard player could but with sticks, instantly, in real time. At its best it was amazing. I formed a band—Earthworks—specifically around the idea of triggering chords and pitches and samples over MIDI. But the drawbacks were (and continue to be) legion—from freighting costs for custom equipment, to the sheer complexity of the programming, to the inflexibility of the program once you've completed it, to the ever-greater demand for increased expression via controller functions, and so on. As the manufacturers (who could have solved these problems) saw a disappointing sales return, their interests also shifted, and the handful of pioneers in each country were left alone to swing in the breeze.

Then there was the problem of authorship—particularly on records. The minute you play electronics live on a CD, your character and personality seem to dissolve and reappear on some other plane—and everything sounds like it's programmed. It's hard to put one's finger on why, although the natural antipathy between the digital and analog mediums—as well as the electronic and acoustic ones—has a lot to do with it.

I have plenty of ideas for the future, but I think someone else can do the MIDI assignments and the switching of chords and pitches, thank you. If nothing else, my use of electronics has enormously increased my sense of sound combinations and why things work in percussion and why they don't. More generally, sympathetic resonance, sympathetic vibration, and touch sensitivity are eternal variables that need a lot more than 128 slots of MIDI to reproduce. That said, I haven't regretted a minute of the time spent, and I still believe that electronic percussion—while it might be marking time right now—is undoubtedly here to stay.

Igor Cavalera

Q I've been playing for three years now, and I'm tired of playing 4/4 patterns with accents on 2 and 4. I'd like to get into some playing with a Latin feel. I've seen many players who can totally rip the Latin grooves, but I can never manage to translate these ideas when I get behind the set. Do you have any suggestions?

Also, when I saw you play with Sepultura recently there was some really cool music with a very untraditional rhythm playing over the P.A. as everyone was leaving. What was that?

Derek Burns
Chiloquin, OR

Q I loved your playing on *Chaos A.D.* I'd like to know what brand, sizes, and types of ride and China cymbals you used for that recording.

Andy Spruill
Seaford, VA

A Thanks for the kind words, guys. To answer Derek first, it's cool to see that people are getting interested in Latin and tribal drumming from South America. The *best* way to learn is to go to Brazil and learn from all the samba schools (which are really more like clubs than actual schools). They teach people how to play for free—right in the middle of the streets—so it's a lot of fun to learn. Of course, a ticket to Brazil is expensive, so I'll give you some names of groups; perhaps you can find some CDs in your import shops.

- Chico Cience and Nagao Zumbi (lots of crazy stand-up drumming on this!).
- Paralamas Do Sucesso (lots of Latin/Brazilian/Caribbean drumming).
- Olodum. (They also played with Paul Simon!)
- Kodo (from Japan—that's the band we play after our set).
- Neurosis (from the USA—a great band to see live, 'cause they play some drums and percussion on stage).

To answer Andy's question, on *Chaos A.D.* (and whenever I play) I use Zildjian Z Series *Brilliants.* My ride is a 22" heavy, and my China is a 20" *China Trash.*

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Vinnie Paul
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HH Splashes
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HH Mini Chinese
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HH Jazz Ride
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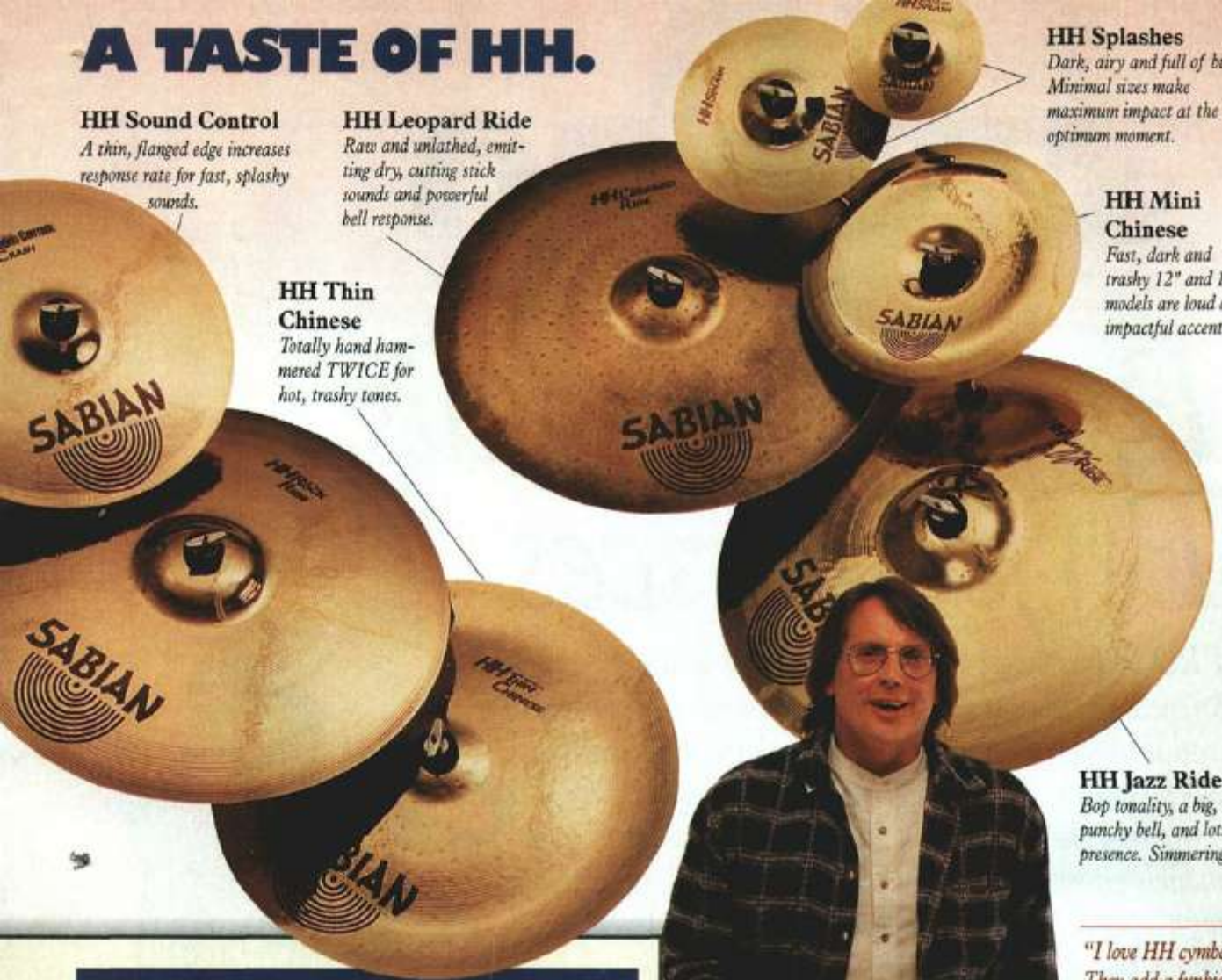

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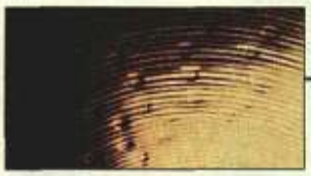

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"I love HH cymbals. They add a funkier, bluesier sound to the cut of my AAs and AAXs."
Richie Hayward
(Little Feat, Eric Clapton)

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"PRO cymbals have a cool sound that's very direct. I play them and HHs with my Signature Chinese. It's a great mix of high and low pitches, cold and hot sounds, with a wicked Chinese."
Carmine Appice
(Guitar Zeus, Mother's Army)

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PRO is a different type of SABIAN cymbal and sound. It's non-cast, so unlike AA, HH and AAX, which are rolled, shaped and hammered from raw bronze castings, PROs are formed with computer precision, while still getting the same hands-on attention to detail as other SABIANs.

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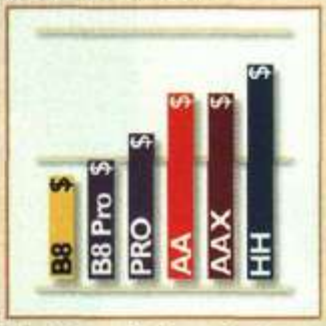

Precision production methods cut PROs prices without cutting quality, so you can add more of our best ever Euro-style cymbals to your setup for much less money.

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(Production Manager)

A TASTE OF PRO.

PRO Studio Crashes
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PRO China Splashes
Trashy little upside-down cymbals stand alone or fit atop a crash... the latter eliminating the need for another cymbal stand.

PRO Chinese
Heavily hammered bow and extreme edge angle add raw, cutting aggression.

PRO Splashes
Small-bell splash is high-pitched and fast.

PRO Fusion Hats
"These hats are quite, quite excellent: perfectly clear and defined, with a wonderfully focused attack." (Rhythm)

PRO Dry Ride
Solid bow and bell are ideal for quick stick response, with distinct, spread-free definition.

PRO Mini Chinese
Small size and tight, direct and edgy response make this a funky add-on.

PRO Studio Ride
Thin bow and clear bell respond with shimmering tone and clarity.

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The high pitch of PRO means the sounds are exceptionally bright and will cut through in any music.

"For me, it's the brightness of the sound... especially on stage. PRO really cuts."
Mark Schulman
(Simple Minds)

"I think the low pricing of PRO is just as important as the sound... they're great cymbals, comparable to the best European brands, but nowhere near as expensive."
Toss Panos
(Steve Vai, Dweezil Zappa)

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Sliding Axis Pedal

Q I recently bought a new Axis double pedal—which is outstanding. But the left pedal tends to slide forward—even on carpet—possibly due to its light weight. Do you have any suggestions to solve this problem?

Mike Cummings
Virginia Beach, VA

A The easiest way to stop any pedal with a base plate from sliding is to place *Velcro* on the bottom of the pedal plate (or reinforce what is already there). You can buy adhesive strips of *Velcro* at virtually any supermarket or builders' supply store. Attach strips of the "toothed" portion of the *Velcro* to the underside of your pedal plate. This should help it stick to your drum rug. Failing that, a strip or two of duct tape placed neatly along the top edges of the pedal plate and extending onto the rug should do the trick.

Improving Bass Drum Head Durability

Q Do you know of any drumhead company that makes a bass drum head that will last longer than any other bass drum head? I use regular felt beaters, but I play death metal music with double-bass mania—and I break a lot of bass drum heads. Is it the way I play or the way I tune—or do bass drum heads just break often with this style of music? Please help—it's getting expensive.

Chris Salazar
Santa Fe, NM

A We can't recommend any one brand over any other, but we can certainly comment about type. If you're playing extremely hard, fast bass drum patterns, you need a head capable of withstanding such abuse. Obviously it should be a twin-ply head, which will be more durable than a single-ply head. In addition, several companies offer heads with added "dots" of reinforcement material at the impact area.

After you've chosen a strong basic drumhead, you should add an adhesive impact pad (available from most drumhead companies as accessory items) to further reinforce the point of impact. Most bass drum head breakage does not occur as the result of the sheer impact of the beater. Instead, *repeated* impact—especially at the high speed and frequency called for by death metal playing—creates a tremendous amount of heat due to friction. This build-up of heat can actually soften the plastic of an unprotected head, weakening it at the beater impact point and making it easier to break. Reinforcement pads are generally made of a non-plastic material (such as nylon or *Kevlar* fabric) and are much more resistant to friction. Also, as they begin to wear through, they can easily be replaced at a much lower cost than the price of a new bass drum head.

Pro-Mark Stick Tips

Q I've been a user of several different types of nylon-tipped drumsticks for about twenty years. Currently I favor Pro-Mark *Jazz* nylon-tipped oak sticks. However, I've had to replace two pairs in the last nine months because the tips were worn so badly they no longer produced the sound or response to which I'm accustomed. I play about ten hours per week, and one pair had to be discarded after about only four months (160 hours). The rest of the stick has held up to my playing just fine. I've made no equipment changes and I wonder why only recently the stick tips have been deteriorating on me.

TJ. Benekos
Tucson, AZ

A Realistically speaking, most contemporary drummers would be thrilled to get 160 hours of use out of any single pair of sticks. There are literally thousands who wouldn't get 160 *minutes,* no matter the brand, model, or tip type. However, since you indicate that your tip problem was something new, we must assume that your playing style is not normally hard on sticks.

We sent your inquiry directly to Pro-Mark for a response, and their national sales/artist relations manager Pat Brown replied: "I must admit to being puzzled by Mr. Benekos' comments. This is the first time we have ever had a complaint about excessive wear on nylon tips. However, Pro-Mark sticks are fully guaranteed against defects in material and/or workmanship. That includes nylon tips—which, incidentally, are guaranteed not to crack, chip, break, or fall off. If Mr. Benekos will call me or Bari Ruggeri (our consumer relations coordinator) at (800) 233-5250, we'll be happy to talk to him and to try to solve the problem."

Tama Imperialstar Drums

Q I own a Tama *Imperialstar* five-piece drumset with a yellow finish. I bought it second- or third-hand earlier this year. I'm wondering how old it might be and what material it's made of. All of the pieces have a black Tama logo over the airhole.

I'm also curious about the *Imperialstar* bass drum pedal. It has a unique design that I've never seen before. It's a very heavy-duty pedal and has a single spring extending out from the top at an angle (nearly parallel to the beater). I'd like to know if this style has been discontinued.

Sean McDermott
via Internet

A Tama's Paul Specht provided us with the following information: "From Mr. McDermott's description, he has a Tama *Imperialstar* set from the mid- to late 1970s, in the finish known as canary yellow. The shells are nine plies of select hardwood with an interior of white *Zola-Coat,* a moisture barrier that often led people to believe—mistakenly—that these drums were synthetic. The *Imperialstar* drum line featured Stewart Copeland as one of its many well-known endorsers, and was one of Tama's best-known and most popular pro lines. It was part of the Tama line-up from the mid-70s to 1986.

"Both the very early 6755 *King Beat* and the early 6740 *Hi-Beat* pedals featured the name *Imperialstar* on the footboard.

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However, Mr. McDermott's description definitely pegs his pedal as the *Hi-Beat,* which was part of the Tama line up until the mid-1980s. Features included easy spring adjustment (due to the top-mounted spring assembly), adjustable stroke angle, built-in anchors, a positive beater clamp, and a heavy-duty cam strap of industrial nylon for the cam-drive assembly."

Bissonette Sound Supplement

Q About ten years ago *MD* ran a *Sound Supplement* with Gregg Bissonette drum solos taken from an album by an artist Gregg had played for. I am unable to recall the name of the artist, but the music was of the jazz/fusion type with a good deal of odd meters in it. Can you tell me the artist's name and what album the music came from?

Chris Goudy
Scottsdale, AZ

A The *Sound Supplement* you refer to appeared in the July, 1988 *MD.* Gregg's solos were taken from an album by saxophonist Brandon Fields called *The Other Side Of The Story* (Nova 8602). Gregg has done other work with Brandon since then.

Drumming Hangover

Q I am currently playing about three to four nights a week, and I'm experiencing a rather ill feeling the morning after the gigs. It's been about two years since I played this much, and since my return to live drumming I've noticed almost a "hangover" feeling after the gig. I was wondering if you know anything about this or have had any other drummers complain or experience this feeling. I have started to wear earplugs and it seems to reduce the feeling, but there is still a certain degree of nausea. Please give me any information you have on this phenomenon.

Scotty Kormos
Los Angeles, CA

A A "hangover" the day after a gig is not at all uncommon—especially among players who work strenuous gigs in less-than-optimum environmental conditions. Additionally, the type of lifestyle one leads on and off the gig can have a tremendous effect on how one's body responds. Further, if you have returned to regular playing after a layoff, there is an "acclimation factor" involved.

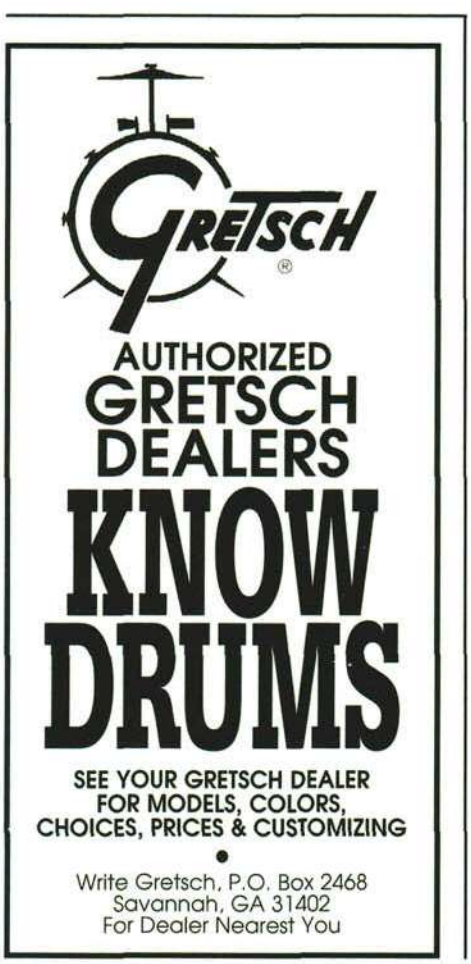
A traditional "hangover" is fundamentally caused by dehydration—usually as the result of the body's hard work trying to process an overabundance of sugar. Alcohol (usually the cause of hangovers) is converted by the body into sugar, and processed accordingly. This process takes a lot of fluids, and when it's overloaded, it drains those fluids from the body—causing the dehydration. The same effect can be achieved by drinking too many *non*-alcoholic—but high-sugar—beverages. Caffeine exacerbates the problem, so too many cola drinks can produce as bad a hangover as too many hard drinks. Add to that the natural dehydrating effect of strenuous exercise—like drumming—and you've got all the ingredients for a real problem.

Now let's talk about air pollution. Any nightclub is likely to be heavily filled with cigarette smoke. Little more needs to be said about the detrimental effects of second-hand smoke on a person's lungs. If you smoke yourself, you are adding to the problem ten-fold. The lungs cannot process oxygen properly while fighting this type of pollution. The result is that while you are performing—and your body needs the greatest oxygenation—you are actually receiving *less* oxygen than usual.

So now you aren't getting enough oxygen at the same time your body is dehydrating. On top of that, it has been proven that the sonic impact of high-volume music has a detrimental effect on the middle ear—the source of equilibrium. That's why loud music can actually make a person feel dizzy and/or nauseous. It's exactly the same effect as motion sickness.

What can you do? Since you're using earplugs, you've already taken steps against high volume, which every drummer should do not only for this reason but also to protect his or her hearing. Additionally, you should drink only non-sugared, non-alcoholic fluids just before, during, and just after the gig—and plenty of them. (Bottled water, seltzer, or even club soda from the bar are your best bets.) Obviously you should not smoke yourself, and you should take whatever steps you can to keep second-hand smoke away from you. (A fan might help; taking breaks outside in the fresh air is also important.)

Finally, try to keep yourself in good health generally, including a good diet and plenty of rest. Drumming is the most physical of all musical pursuits. Consider yourself an athlete and treat your body accordingly.



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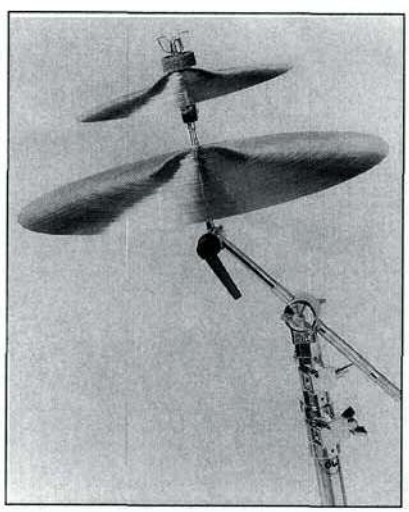
Ugly Percussion Poly Vinyl Drums

Ugly Percussion offers hand-crafted snare drums with seamless poly vinyl shells and 45° beveled edges, which the company says results in a unique sound. Drums are available in 13" diameters and 3 1/2" ($179), 5 1/2" ($189), *6 1/2"* ($199), and 8" ($209) depths. Many different colors and wood finishes are available, along with custom colors and hardware. **Ugly Percussion, 11085 E. Emery Rd., South Wales, NY 14139, (716) 646-5604.**

New DW Items

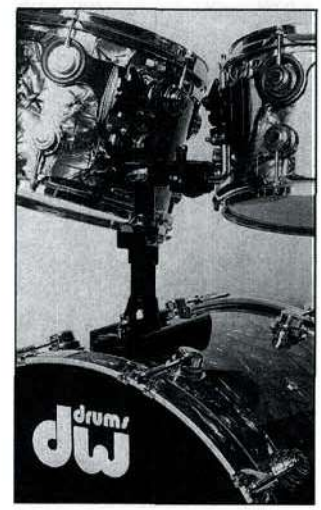


Drum Workshop has added several new accessories to its line, along with improvements to its hardware systems and drum mounts.

Cymbal stackers are available in 4" and 6" straight ($29) and angle-adjustable ($89) versions. The stackers, along with DW's new *835* Quick-Release Stem, fit DW 9000 Series cymbal stands as well as many other metric-thread cymbal stems. Three models of closed auxiliary hi-hat holders are also offered.

The *50H Delta Tn-Bearing* system upgrade kit easily converts any existing DW 5000 series single bass drum pedal to a new *Delta* model. The kit costs $49; two kits are required to upgrade double pedals. A new 5500 *Delta* hi-hat has been developed to complement the pedal line. The hi-hat pedals incorporate a ball-bearing hinge and a ball-bearing linkage system for smoothness and precision. The hi-hat carries a list price of $265.

The 9000 variable-position sliding bass drum mount allows increased positioning flexibility while eliminating the negative acoustic effects caused by conventional tube-type holders that pass through the shell. The mounts are available in several configurations (single tom, double tom, tom/cymbal, etc.) ranging from $95 to $185 in price.



DW rack toms are now available with DW's own *STM* Suspension Tom Mounts, which feature a bracket that fits around the company's distinctive round lugs—maximizing drum resonance without affecting tuning or requiring drum removal during head changes. The mounts range in price from $70 to $100 depending on size and finish. Floor toms now feature the *FLT-3* Floor-Tom Suspension System, which includes a set of three floor-tom legs and shell-mounted brackets with a design advance said to provide a rounder, more resonant floor-tom sound. *FLT-3*'s are priced at $114 per set. **Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030, tel: (805) 485-6999, fax: (805) 485-1334.**

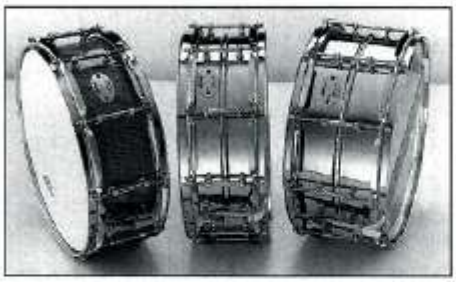
Pro-Mark Rick Latham Drumsticks

Pro-Mark has recently added the new *Rick Latham 717* to its line. Slightly modified to Rick's specifications, the redesigned American hickory 777 is 16" long and 9/16" in diameter (similar to a Pro-Mark *5A)* with a "bulging barrel" tip especially designed to produce a more articulate cymbal sound. The stick is also said to have a unique taper resulting in better balance, response, and overall feel. The stick is available in wood tip only, at a suggested retail price of $9.25 per pair. **Pro-Mark, 10707 Craighead Dr., Houston, TX 77025, tel: (800) 908-4377.**

New Ludwig Shells, Lugs, And Finishes

Ludwig is offering a *Limited Edition Brass* snare drum series that duplicates the models sold in the 1960s. The chrome-plated models are available in 5x14 and 6 1/2x14 sizes, with seamless

brass shells, Ludwig's *Imperial* lugs, *P85* snare strainers, and 2.3mm steel stamped hoops. Other *Limited Edition* drums include five-ply maple/poplar-shell *Super Classic* drums—with a veneer of satinwood on the outside for a unique look—in 3x13, 5x14, and 6 1/2x14 sizes. Each drum has a badge with a recorded serial number and William F. Ludwig's signature.



Ludwig is also re-introducing the original tube lug design first placed on Ludwig drums over eighty years ago. The new "old" lugs will be available on the *Limited Edition Brass* and *Super Classic Satinwood* 5x14 and 6 1/2x14 sizes. The lugs are crafted from brass and are chrome-plated.

Finally, Ludwig is now offering any *Classic* or *Super Classic* drumkit, snare drum, or individual drum with *Vintage* finishes. These include black oyster pearl (the "Ringo" finish), white marine pearl (the "Buddy" finish), black diamond pearl, silver sparkle, black sparkle, and champagne sparkle. **Ludwig Industries, P.O. Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515, (219) 522-1675.**

Tama Rhythm Watch

Tama's *RW100 Rhythm Watch* is a programmable metronome designed specifically for drummers. The unit can memorize up to twenty different beat and tempo patterns, which can be accessed either on the unit or by an optional remote footswitch. A rapid-change tempo dial permits faster changes than are possible with most metronomes' increment/decrement switches. The *Rhythm Watch* can be attached to any Tama cymbal stand or cymbal arm attachment for secure and easy drumkit practice. The unit also features a headphone jack for use in silent practicing or for increased audibility in high-volume situations. **Tama Drums, Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020, tel: (215) 638-8670, fax: (215) 245-8583 or 327 Broadway, Idaho Falls, ID 83402.**

UFIP Deep Hammering On Natural Series

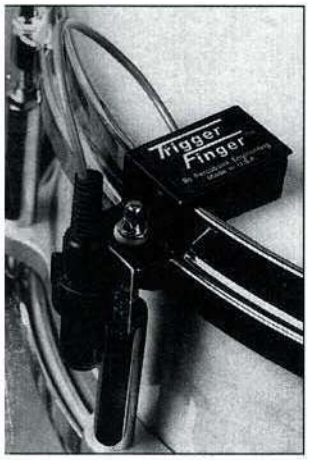
UFIP Cymbals has announced that a newly developed "deep hammering" process is now being used on all of its *Natural Series* ride, crash, hi-hat, and specialty cymbals. This process is said to give new cymbals an older, more classic sound through the use of a specially designed hammer that creates small but relatively deep dimples in the cymbal. The process is designed for musical applications where a darker, warmer cymbal tone with a greater balance of low and mid frequencies is required, such as jazz, blues, R&B, funk, and fusion. UFIP cymbals are distributed in the U.S. by **Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030, tel: (805) 485-6999, fax: (805) 485-1334.**

Pan Electric Drum Mic's

Pan Electric offers drum microphones designed to clip directly onto drum rims or the tuning rods of bass drums. The condenser-style mic's operate from a self-contained phantom power source that also mounts onto the bass drum of a kit. Each power box uses an AA battery for each mic', which is said to last from 150 to 300 hours. A two-pack (two clip-style mic's and dual phantom power box) lists for $129.95; a four-pack (one bass drum mic' and three clip mic's plus two power boxes) is priced at $259.95. The product is shipped with a fourteen-day trial/return option, and is warranted for ninety days. **Pan Electric, 207 Rundleview Drive N.E., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T1Y 1H7, (403) 285-8893.**

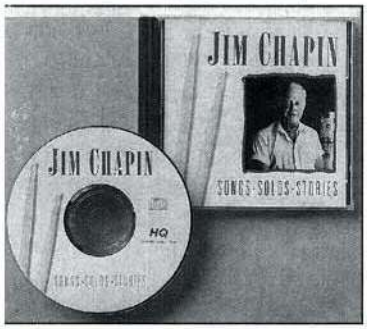
Trigger Finger And Chapin CD From HQ Percussion

HQ Percussion Products is distributing the *Trigger Finger* trigger holder, made by Percussive Engineering, Inc. Designed to be used with small, head-mounted drum triggers, the *Trigger Finger* is said to protect the trigger, reduce false triggering, and in most



applications eliminate the need for adhesives to hold the trigger in place. A steel bracket is used to position a special foam damper that conforms to the shape of the trigger. The bracket is mounted to the drum using one of the existing tension rods. The system also provides an integral clip to grasp the 1/4" jack connection of the trigger. Retail price is $10.95.

Also available from HQ Percussion is Jim Chapin's first solo recording, called *Songs-Solos-Stories.* The sixty-eight-minute release features Jim singing, playing his original songs with a band, playing drum solos, and telling stories. The disc retails for $19.95. HQ **Percussion Products, P.O. Box 430065, St. Louis, MO 63143, (314) 647-9009.**

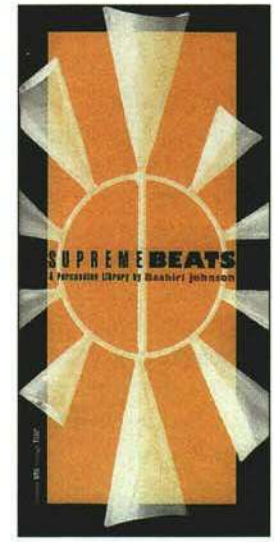


KAT FlatKAT And Controllers With Sounds

KAT is now shipping the *flatKAT,* a 10" gum-rubber trigger pad designed to work with any manufacturer's electronic percussion interface. The pad features a low profile and a "marbleized" finish that doesn't reveal stick marks. Its rubber formulation is said to provide "great feel and quiet stick response." A new internal sensor design promotes even response across the pad with "superior sensitivity and dynamics." Industry-standard 7/8" hardware is used for cost-effective mounting.

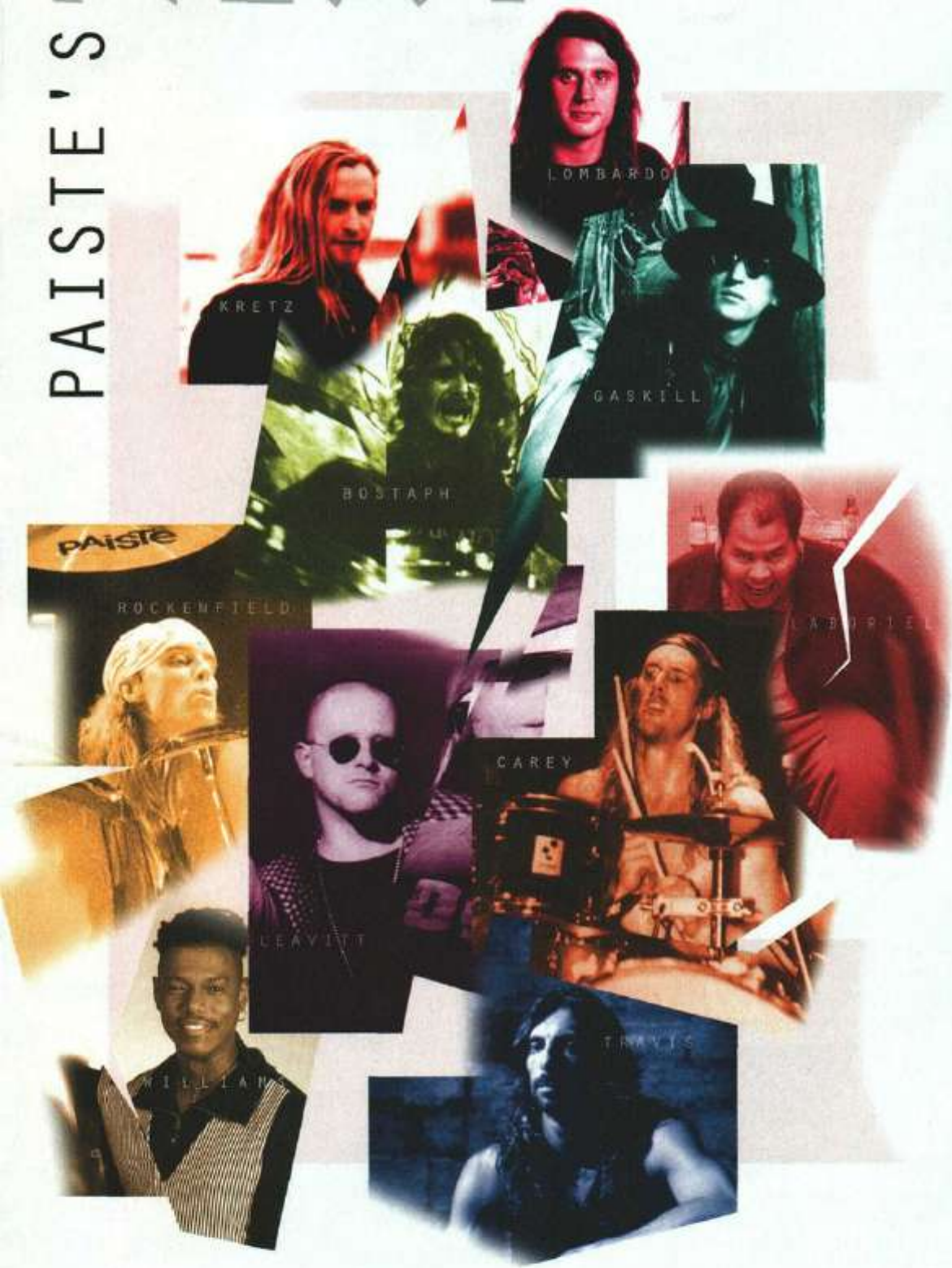
Also new from KAT is the company's first fully self-contained percussion controller, the *malletKAT PRO/WS* (With Sounds). The one-piece, three-octave MIDI mallet controller is loaded with over 300 CD-quality sounds by Kurzweil, including mallet, keyboard, wind, and string sounds as well as drums and percussion instruments. The controller may be expanded to five octaves, and features FSR (Force Sensing Resistor) pads said to be more sensitive and dynamic than those on the original *malletKAT* and also to have the capability to dampen notes and send Aftertouch. The unit features full MIDI implementation as well as breath and foot control inputs. **KAT, Inc., 53 First Ave., Chicopee, MA 01020, tel: (413) 594-7466, fax: (413) 592-7987**.

Bashiri Johnson Supreme Beats Percussion Library



Supreme Beats is a library of percussion sounds created by noted percussionist Bashiri Johnson. The four-CD library includes sounds in the categories of Contemporary, Dance/Hip-Hop, African, and World, and includes more than 650 grooves and 100 instruments. The collection is packaged with a comprehensive and easy-to-use directory, including descriptive information and a complete index. Johnson states that he spent a year compiling and editing the material, and another six months in the recording process. The beats, grooves, and instrumental sounds can be used as compositional tools, recording resources, or samples for electronic percussion or drum triggering. **Grand Street Records & Filmworks, 100 Grand St., New York, NY 10013, (800) GSM-BEAT.**

PAISTE'S NEXT GENERATION . . .



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"These drums are absolutely startling"...

...Simon Phillips

As one of the original members of the Starclassic design group, Simon Phillips is one of the most important reasons *why* Starclassic drums are "absolutely startling." Simon's exacting approach to drum sound made his contributions to the development of Starclassic immeasurable.

"The big, big difference about these drums is that they all have die-cast hoops," remarks Simon. "Die-cast hoops do seem a little 'harder'...and I think that is something one has to get used to, but tuning precision and tuning longevity are better because die-cast hoops don't warp or bend like triple flanged hoops."

The strength of die-cast hoops makes another stand-out Starclassic feature possible: the Star-Cast Mounting System*. Star-Cast is *simply* easier...easier to set-up, easier to change heads and easier to pack up at the end of the night. Says Simon: "It's a very serious, very elegant system of suspending the drum. You just unscrew these three rubber things, and the drum comes away in your hand."

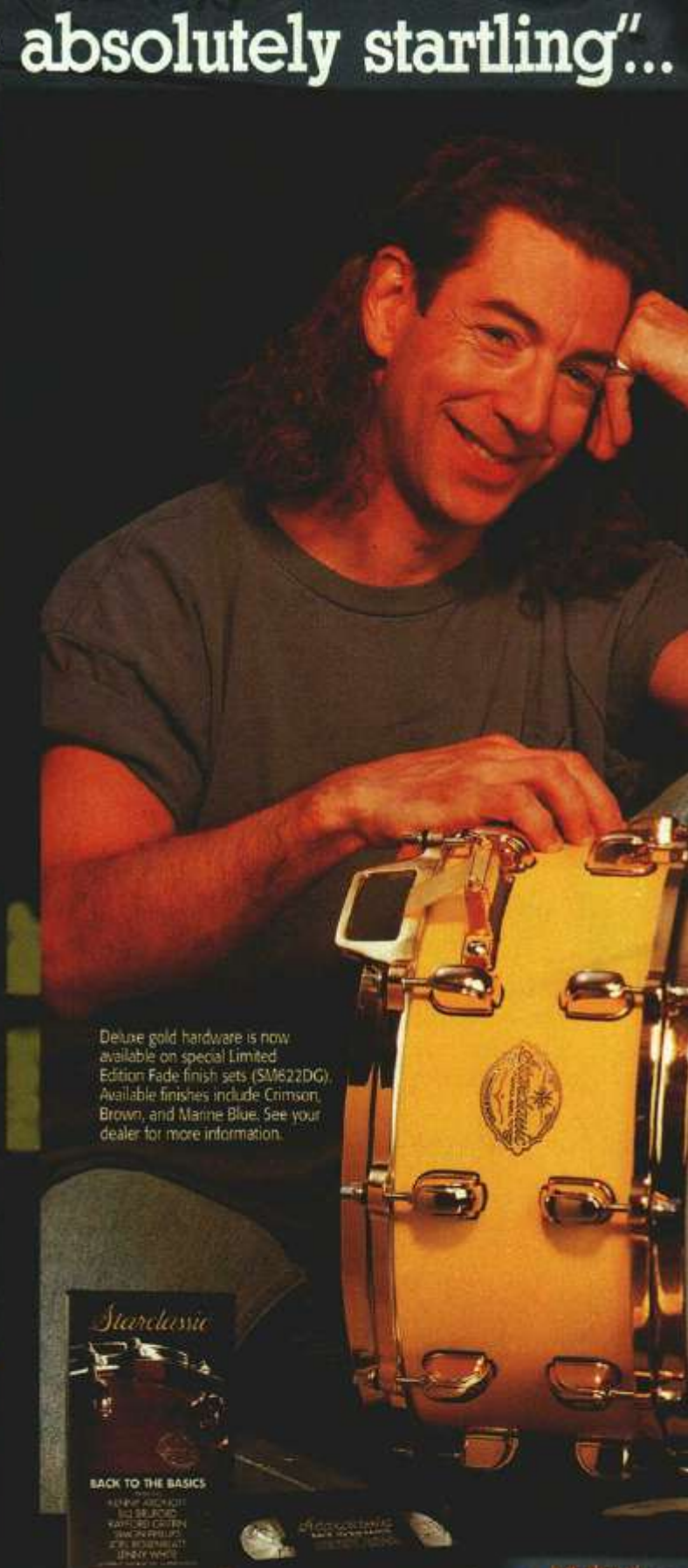
Die-cast hoops and the Star-cast Mounting System are just two of the many features that make Starclassic "the ultimate drum." But there's more. A visit to your Starclassic Dealer will help you understand how much more.

Perhaps Simon says it all..."I played 38 shows in Europe and Japan where everybody just freaked out about these drums...they loved the sound of them. Now you'd have a pretty tough time taking them away from me."

Starclassic

BACK TO THE BASICS
A Division of TAMA Drums

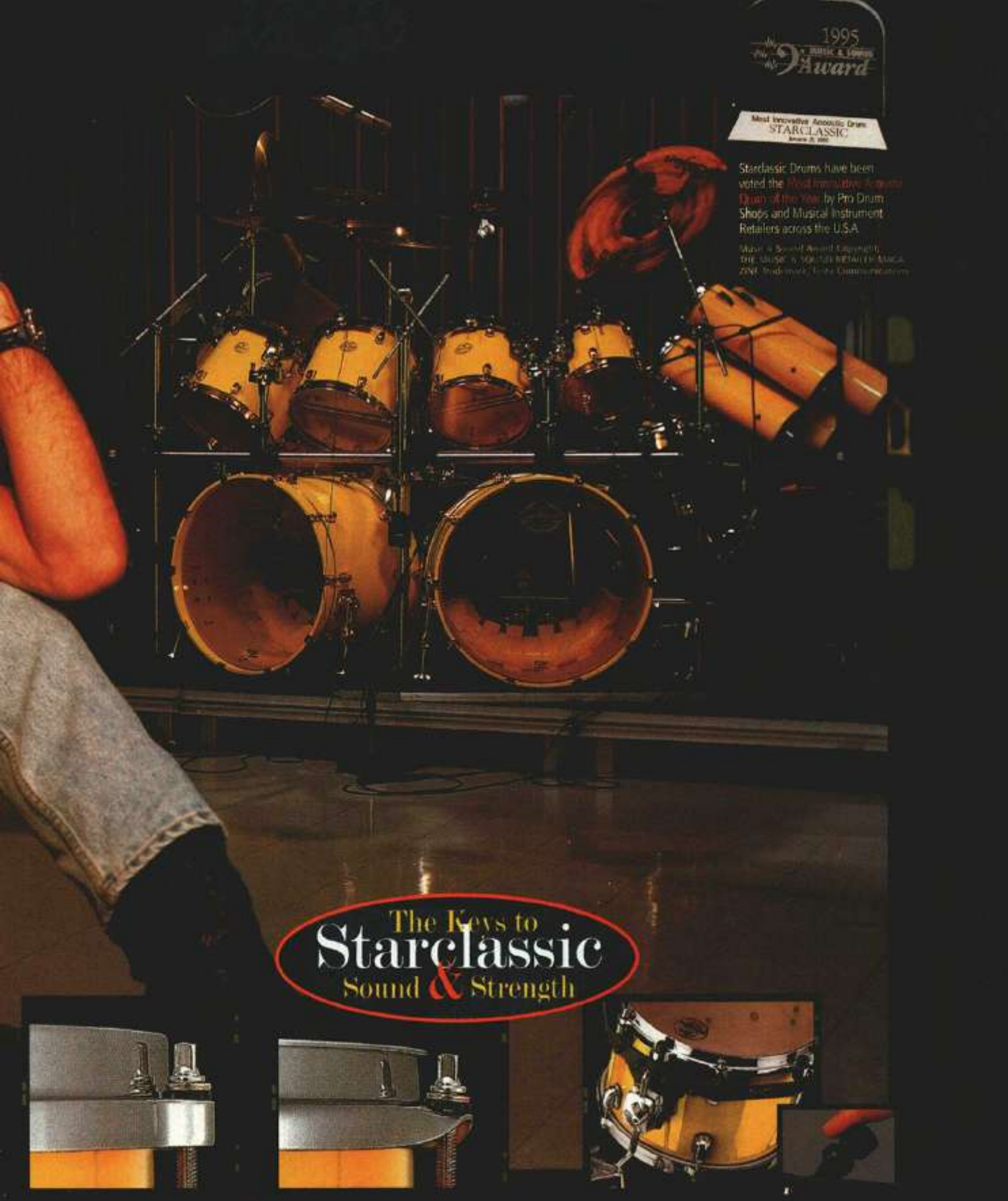
For a full color Starclassic catalog send $3.00 ($5.00 in Canada) to: Starclassic, Dept. MDD42, PO Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020 • PO Box 2009, Idaho Falls, ID 83403 • In Canada: 2165-46th Ave., Lachine, Quebec, H8T-2P1.



Deluxe gold hardware is now available on special Limited Edition Fade finish sets (SM622DG). Available finishes include Crimson Brown, and Marine Blue. See your dealer for more information.

Just released... **Back to the Basics**, a 42 minute stereo video featuring Kenny Aronoff, Bill Bruford, Rayford Griffin, **Simon Phillips**, Joel Rosenblatt and Lenny White.

For a Back to the Basics video plus a free Stardassic catalog send $9.00 ($15.00 in Canada) in check or money order to: Starclassic, PO Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020 • PO Box 2009, Idaho Falls, ID 83403 • In Canada: 2165-46th Ave., Lachine, Quebec, H8T-2P1.



Die-cast hoops (left) are somewhat more expensive than the triple flanged hoops (right) found on most pro drums, but they offer better consistency, strength and attack. The resonant highs of die-cast hoops work beautifully with the warm lows of Starclassic's super-thin shells for incomparable dynamic range and tone.

The Star-Cast Mounting System* allows unrestrained shell resonance and total tom isolation. Unlike other systems each bracket arm is specifically sized for each drum so even hoop tension is ensured. Remove just three rubber-coated Star-Cast attachment bolts and "the drum comes away in your hand."

*The Star-Cast Mounting System is licensed under Pureussion patents

Starclassic Drumkit

by Rick Mattingly

These drums offer innovative performance based on classic simplicity.

The *Starclassic* logo on the front bass drum head carries the slogan "Back to the Basics." While some might use such a phrase to justify a lack of sophistication in design or materials, that is definitely not the case here. Rather, the manufacturer (Hoshino, who also makes Tama drums) has gone to great lengths to design state-of-the-art drums with an emphasis on simplicity. The results are impressive.

Starclassic drums are offered in three series: *Maple, Birch,* and *Performer. MD* received a *Starclassic Maple* kit for review that included a 16x22 bass drum, 10x10, 11x12, 13x14, and 15x16 tom-toms, and a 6 1/2xl4 snare drum.

Drums

The "basic" premise of *Starclassic* kits involves shells that are thin but strong. A thin shell can resonate better than a thick one, and it will also tend to enhance lower overtones, thus giving the drum a bigger, boomier sound. The problem with a thin shell is, of course, that it can't always stand up to the demands of having two drumheads tensioned against it. A thin shell can more easily go out of round, making accurate tuning almost impossible. (Of course, if you *like* your drums to sound like cardboard boxes....)

Hoshino has solved this dilemma with a nine-ply shell of which each ply is only .5mm thick. The plies are cross-laminated, and the seams are staggered and diagonally cut to give the shell maximum strength without the need for reinforcement rings.

Additionally, there is little to interfere with the shells' resonance. Tuning lugs are small, there are no mounting brackets screwed on to the toms or bass drums, and there isn't even a logo badge riveted to the air vent hole. The toms are mounted with the *Star-Cast* suspension system (see below), and the logo is a decal that is applied before the final finish. Air vents are surrounded with a small maple cap.

The toms came fitted with Evans clear *Genera* batter heads and clear *Resonant* bottom heads. The drums produced a full, rich sound with smooth decay, focused pitches, and very good resonance over a fairly wide tuning range (the larger the drum, the wider the range).

Calling the bass drum "boomy" is an understatement; it was downright thunderous. The drum came equipped with an Evans *Genera G2* batter and a *Resonant* front head. Played wide open with no muffling, the drum produced a powerful, full sound that also had remarkable punch. This drum could cut through the loudest situation and still have plenty of tone. The only hardware mounted on the drum, other than the tension lugs, were the spurs, which were heavy-duty and adjustable for height and angle. One of my favorite features of the bass drum involved something it did *not* have: T-handled tuning rods. All rods were drumkey-operated and recessed into the claws.

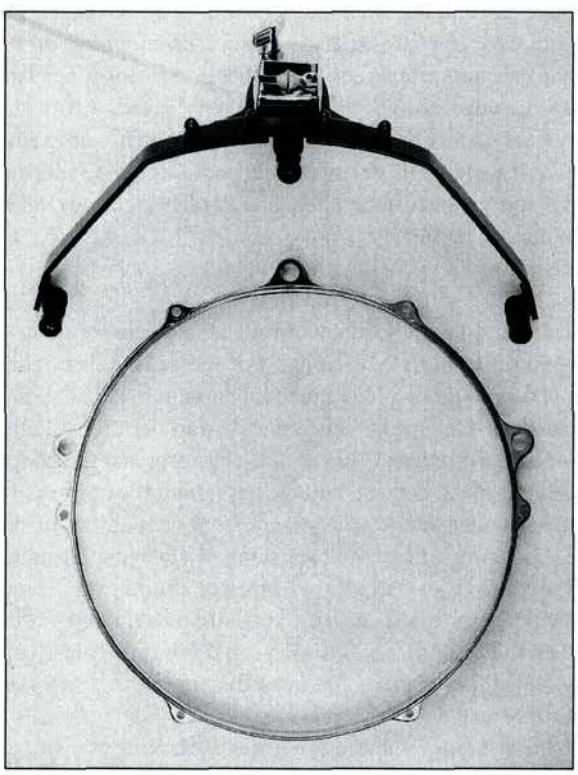
WHAT'S HOT

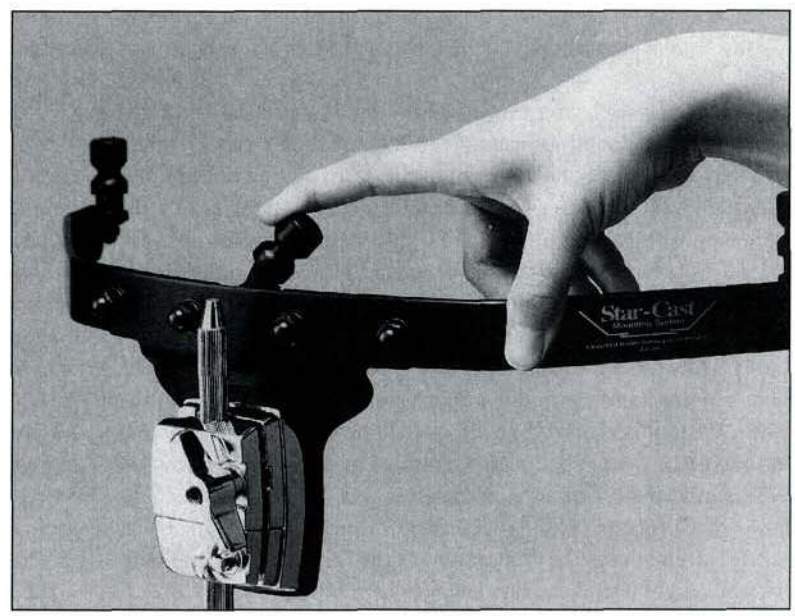
- thin but strong shells that enhance lower overtones
- *Star-Cast* mounting system that doesn't interfere with tuning rods
- no gimmicks—emphasis is on quality and attention to detail within a basic, simple design

WHAT'S NOT

- having to remove the toms from their stands to change heads is, at the least, a minor annoyance

The snare drum was a delight. Fitted with an Evans *UNO 58 1000* batter and a *Resonant* snare head, the drum produced fat, meaty backbeats and cracking rimshots. Snare response was excellent right to the edge of the drum, and the drum sounded equally good with snares slightly loosened for loud backbeats or with the snares tightened for crisp response with jazz-type snare comping. The sound was both bright and full-bodied, with enough ring for projection but not so much that the drum couldn't be played wide open in a lot of settings. The snare release was a simple lever design, but it and the butt plate extended out so that the straps holding the snares were at a 45-degree angle rather than the usual





The Star-Cast mounting system utilizes drum hoops with extra "ears," as well as flexible, rubber-coated mounting bolts.

90-degree angle (which might help explain the excellent snare response).

After playing the entire kit with the Evans heads it came with, I also tried different drums with a variety of popular head combinations such as Remo coated *Ambassador* batters and clear *Diplomat* bottoms, *Pinstripe* batters and clear *Ambassador* bottoms, and Cannon coated *Attack* heads. Predictably, the drums were a bit drier with more attack when using coated heads, and warmer and thuddier with the *Pinstripes.* Because of the smoothness of the drums' bearing edges, the consistency of tuning offered by the die-cast rims, the perfect roundness of the shells, and the resonance allowed by the mounting system, *whatever* head I tried performed to its optimum capabilities.

Mounting System

Hoshino's *Star-Cast* suspension tom mounts are very closely based on RIMS (to the point that they are licensed under Purecussion patents). The main difference is that, whereas RIMS mounts attach to a drum's tension screws, *Star-Cast* mounts attach to three extra "ears" in the batter-side hoops of the toms. All bolts are rubber-encased to prevent metal-to-metal contact and to provide added stability, and head changing is easier, since the mount stays attached to the hoop, (Still, in order to change a batter head you must remove the drum from its holder.)

Some people contend that having the mounting hardware attached to tuning lugs or a batter rim puts pressure on part of the drumhead, causing it to go out of tune and lose resonance. Hoshino claims that the rigidity of the die-cast zinc *Starclassic* hoops prevents this problem. To test that claim, I took the toms off the mounts and tuned each one very carefully—making sure that the pitch was identical opposite each tension lug. I pushed down on each head to stretch it, then fine-tuned the drums again. I then placed each drum on a snare-drum stand and played on it, checking the tuning periodically until I was sure that each head was "set."

Then I hung each drum on its *Star-Cast* mount at about a 45° angle and left them all for a couple of hours. I didn't play on them; I wanted to see if the sheer weight of the drum pulling on the holders would have any effect on the head tension. After checking the pitch opposite each tuning lug, I could detect no changes, nor could I detect any loss of resonance when I played the drums.

The drums still had some of the wobble common to those equipped with RIMS mounts. As usual, it was most pronounced on the 16" tom. But the drums seemed just a bit more stable than most hanging toms, with the wobble coming from the flex in the L-arm the tom is mounted on rather than from the drum wobbling on the mount itself. Too much wobble, obviously, could throw off one's timing with fast sticking patterns, but I can't say I experienced that problem with the *Starclassic* toms. Actually, the fact that the drums have the freedom to "give" a little bit could help prevent a lot of drumhead breakage for hard hitters.

For a suspension system, the *Star-Cast* holders fit pretty snugly around the drums. Between that and the fact that the L-arms will swivel to a variety of angles, one can mount the toms fairly close to each other. There is a memory lock that fits on the L-arm so that once you decide on your optimum arrangement, set-up and tear-down can be accomplished with the turn of one large wing screw on each tom holder, and the angles and positioning will remain constant.

Hardware

The *Starclassic* kit came supplied with an *HP80P Iron Cobra* bass drum pedal, one of four *Iron Cobra* models. This is the "professional" model with the *Rolling Guide* cam that provides even torque throughout the beater's path, the *Vari-Pitch* beater holder that allows independent adjustment of the beater arm angle, and the *Beater Balancer* that helps adjust the feel. (For a complete look at all of the *Iron Cobra* pedals, see the *Product Close-Up* in the October '94 issue of *MD.)*

The *HH95* hi-hat pedal features the *Lever-Glide* link system, adjustable spring tension that goes from effortless to fairly stiff, an adjustable leg that allows the hi-hat to be tilted, and double-braced legs. The pedal was quiet, smooth, and extremely heavy-duty.

The *HS90* snare drum stand was the basket design, with double-braced legs and huge rubber feet that kept the stand stable whether the legs were extended all the way out or angled closer to the center post. The stand is height-adjustable over about a 7" range, which should accommodate most players.

The two middle toms were mounted on an *HTW99* stand, which has two independent tom holders so that one drum can be placed over the bass drum and the other one set lower in a floor tom position. The smallest and largest toms were each mounted on an *HTC97* stand, each of which also has a boom arm for a cymbal. The kit also included an *HC93B* boom cymbal stand. All of the tom and cymbal stands have double-braced legs that can extend out over a very wide angle for maximum stability, one independent leg so that the stand can be tilted, and various memory collars for quick, consistent set-ups.

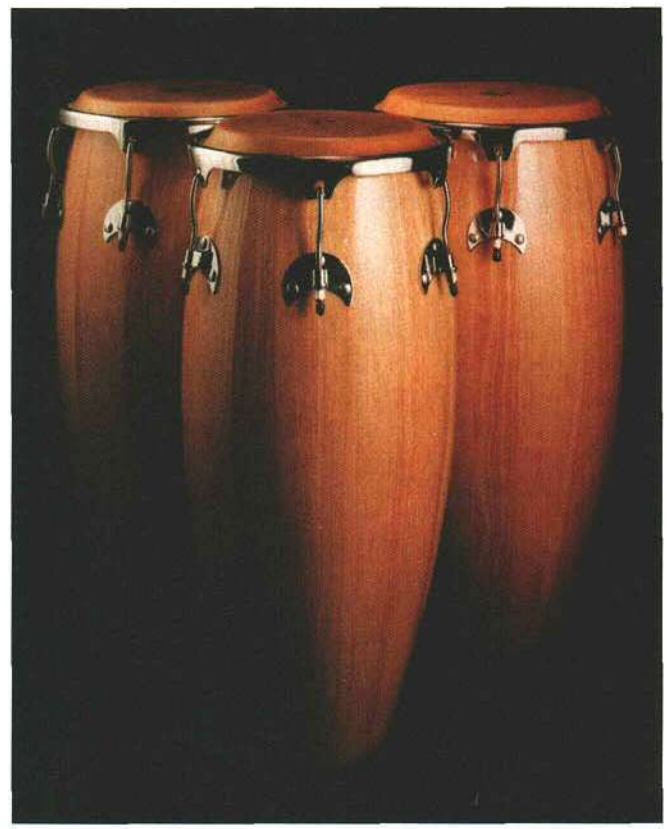
Conclusions

The *Starclassic* drumkit is quality throughout. There are no new gimmicks, just refinements of tried-and-true methods of drum construction and tom mounting, and great attention to detail. The finish is flawless, all tuning lugs are isolated from the drum shells, the tuning rods have rubber washers between them and the hoops to avoid metal-to-metal contact, and the bass drum rods even have an extra rubber collar that prevents them from coming out of the claws when changing a head. And speaking of changing heads, in the process of trying out all of the different drumheads, I was impressed with the ease with which the tuning rods threaded back into the lugs. Everything has obviously been very well machined—something that has not been the case with every top-line drumkit I've tested over the years.

The *Starclassic* kit as reviewed above has a list price of approximately $5,300 (allowing for fluxuations in the yen/dollar exchange rate).

Rhythm Tech Alpha Series Congas And Bongos

by Heinz Kronberger



These new Latin drums offer classic designs with innovative features.

Up to now the Rhythm Tech company has been known primarily for their excellent small percussion instruments, such as tambourines, chimes, and the Pete Engelhart metal percussion series. Utilizing the same high quality standards and attention to detail and player comfort that they've incorporated into those products for the past fifteen years, Rhythm Tech is now offering a line of oak bongos and congas that has been christened the *Alpha* series. In the short time they've been available, these drums have already gained a reputation for their interesting features, intelligent design, distinctive voices, consistent sound, and durability.

Conga Shell Production

Alpha congas are available in three sizes: 11" Quinto, 11 3/4" Conga, and 12 1/2" Tumba. They're constructed in classic conga fashion—by gluing together wooden staves contoured out of Asian oak. The staves are approximately 3/4" thick, giving the drum a strong shell with a solid appearance. On the other hand, the slender shape of the drums keeps them from looking bulky or massive. The shells are beautifully finished with a clear lacquer—the better to display the warm, natural look of the wood. The bearing edges are sanded smooth, offering optimum head positioning.

Hardware

The mounting hardware on *Alpha* congas follows traditional designs, yet offers a few innovative features. For example, the three mounting bolts that attach each of the side plates to the shell are placed so that no two holes are in line along the same

WHAT'S HOT
- mounting of tuning lugs
- deep and round profile of rims
- high-quality heads on all instruments

WHAT'S NOT
- bongos are a bit heavy

grain in the wood. Rhythm Tech states that this "balances the stress on the shell," promoting a better sound and helping the drums to stay in tune longer. The low-profile curved rims are oversized so that the head does not come in contact with the sides of the shell. This is the "timpanic head" method, and is well-known for allowing the head to vibrate more freely, thus producing a louder, fuller tone. The very low, smooth, curved rim also provides excellent playing comfort to one's hands.

The rims are machined with six grip points for the S-shaped tuning hooks that connect to the side plates. The side plates themselves are fashioned in Rhythm Tech's trademark crescent shape (reminiscent of their tambourines) and have a welded loop to receive the tuning bolts. A sizable nut beneath each loop is used to apply tension to the bolt, and small rubber caps on ends of the tuning lugs (below the nut) save the threads from damage.

All the hardware is completely chrome-plated. A metal collar at the bottom opening of each drum completes the positive visual impression of the instrument, and also provides protection for the wood rim. Each conga is supplied with a simple tripod stand that guarantees solid fit, stability, and playing comfort.

Conga Sound

Alpha congas produce a very warm and convincing character, with precise tone. Selected buffalo skin with a thickness up to 3mm was used for the drumheads. The top side has a smooth surface, which gives a pleasant playing comfort. When playing the drum one can both hear and feel the sound quality in every stroke: a very harmonic, "woody" sound that should satisfy the demands of any conga player.

Bongos

Also new from Rhythm Tech are *Alpha* series oak bongos. They feature the same rim design as is used for the congas. However, instead of tuning lugs on the side of the shell, a massive steel ring is inserted into the lower shell rim to receive the tension bolts. This makes boring holes in the shell unnecessary, and also allows the strong pressure of the head to be divided symmetrically around the whole body of the drum. Because of the solid construction of the shells and hardware and the additional weight of the metal clamps used for fixing the drums on their stand, *Alpha* bongos are really heavy. But that same manner of construction allows the clamping system to handle extreme head pressure.

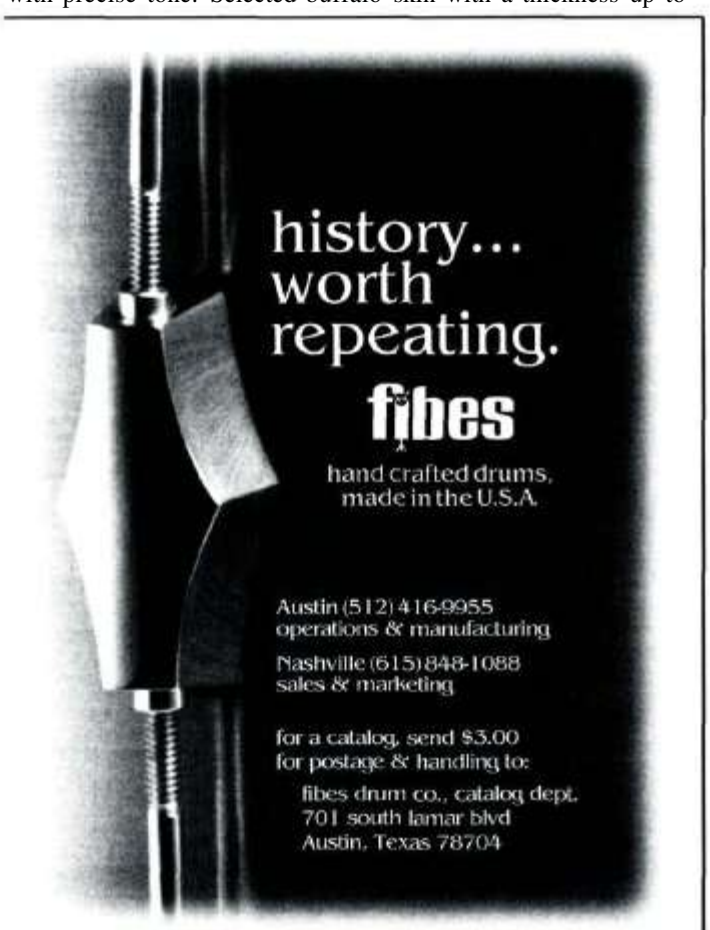
Rhythm Tech offers a tripod stand for use with the *Alpha* bongos. Stand height can be adjusted very quickly by means of a *Touchlock* system, the drums can be mounted easily on the stand, and optimal angle positioning can be achieved by means of a ratchet adjustment.

Bongo Sound

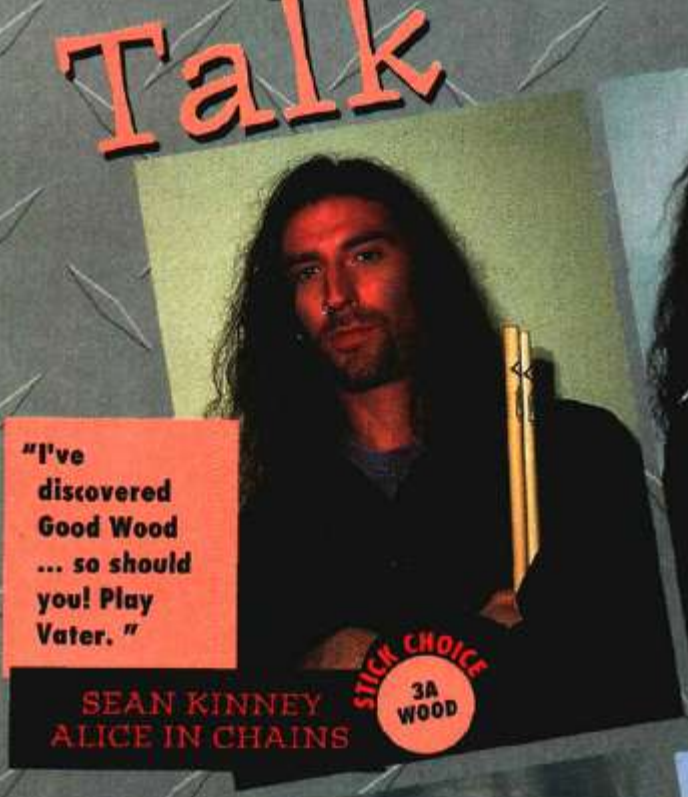
Alpha bongos are fitted with very thin rawhide heads. When the "Macho" drum (the smaller of the two) is tuned high, it has a dry attack and a strong basic tone. The "Hembra" sound is more round and warm. In general, like their larger conga cousins, the *Alpha* bongos offer convincing sound quality—full and rich with all the attributes you'd expect from professional instruments.

Conclusions And Prices

Rhythm Tech's *Alpha* congas and bongos have good-looking oak shells created as the result of fine hand crafting. The construction is strong, and some interesting details are found in their hardware. The extraordinary, transparent sound of the congas are noteworthy (totally wood!). The bongos belong in the upper range of professional hand drums. Their quality of construction and strong sound are especially impressive. List prices are as follows: Quinto—$516; Conga—$537; Tumba—$556; Bongos—$285; Bongo Stand—$98.



More Straight Talk



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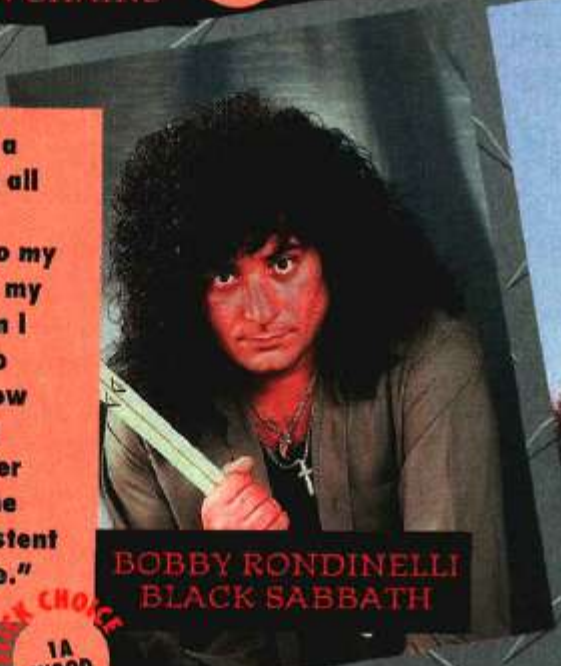

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From a drummers point of view, there are many ways to approach a song. Some more complicated than others. The most elusive talent to acquire is simply called "feel". When a drummer has it, everything he plays seems so effortless, and few players can make a song as effortless as Steve Ferrone. From his ground breaking work with the Average White Band, to his work with Pat Metheny, Eric Clapton and Tom Petty, when you listen to him play it's the "feel" that sets him apart. For players like Steve, their drums become part of their signature sound. The Masters Series from Pearl...like nothing you've heard before.

Photography by Neil Zlozower and John Walker

Steve Ferrone
(currently on tour with Tom Petty)

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Carl Allen

In Pursuit Of Excellence

By Ken Micallef

Photos by Ebet Roberts

The journey from hungry sideman to accomplished leader/composer/producer is a path Carl Allen knows well. From the gospel music of his native Milwaukee, the studying he did at New Jersey's renowned William Paterson College, his hired-gun duties with Freddie Hubbard, Jackie McLean, and Benny Green, and most recently his productions of over fifty recording sessions, Carl Allen has found his way in the music world. And he's done it all through a nose-to-the-grindstone work ethic and a nurturing faith in God.

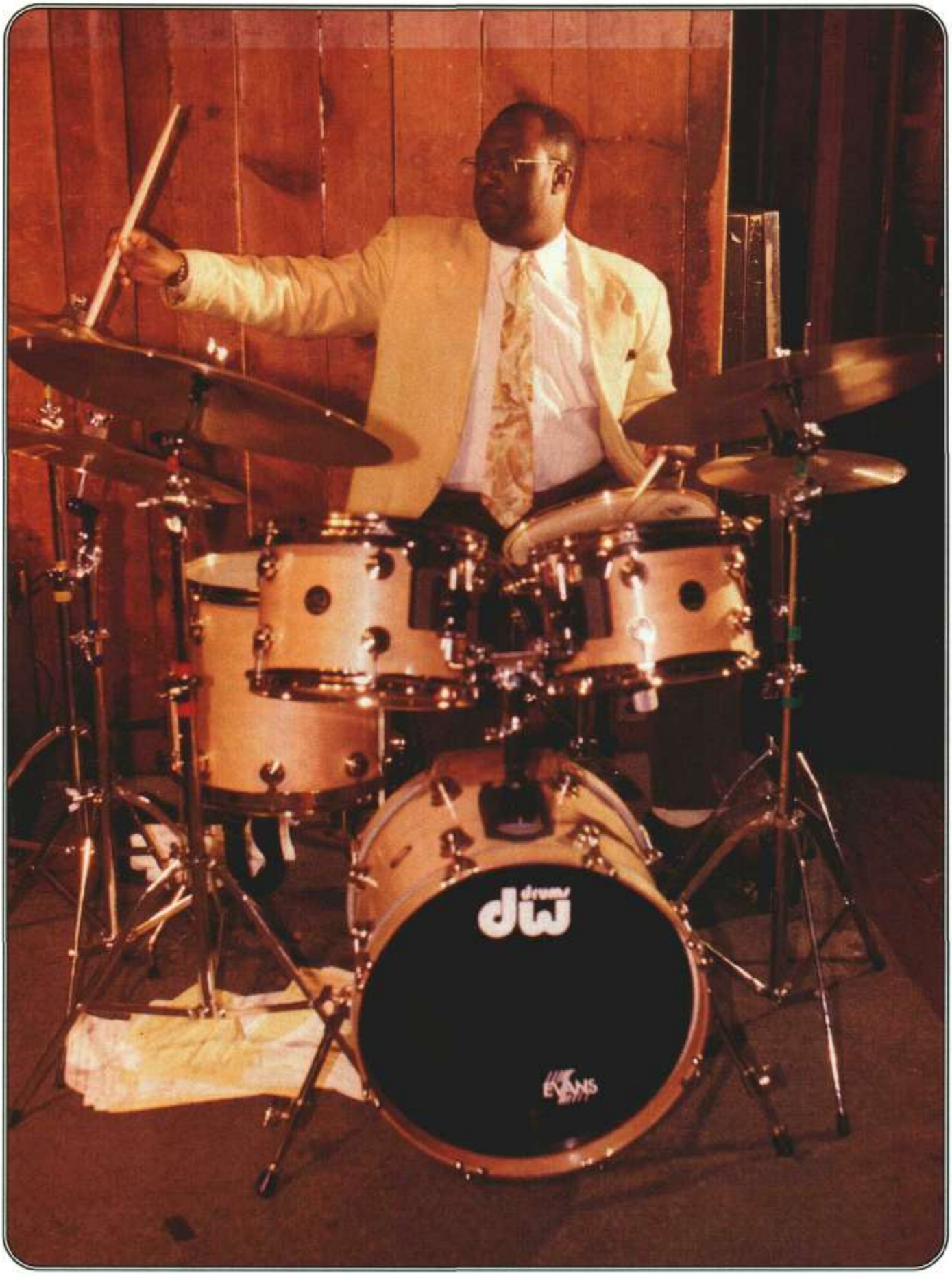
Allen's personality, an unusual combination of artistic sponge and savvy businessman, shines through in his drumming. He can drive a blazing fire through the salty bop of Hubbard and McLean, or just as easily create a warm, wistful palette under the autumnal chords of pianist Geoff Keezer (as he did on a recent performance at Bradley's, a New York jazz club). Articulate and thoughtful, Allen's conversation ranges from his love of Thelonious Monk and artist Romare Bearden to the intricacies of marketing and management.

Often, when a musician aims this high, he loses the subtleties of the instrument as well as any overriding artistic vision. But Allen seems to thrive in the many roles he has chosen for himself. The raw rudimental energy that enlivened his drumming with Freddie Hubbard in the '80s is no less present now, but cured and refined in the smelter of New York City jazz.

Allen's successful career as a leader has also followed his expectant, methodical vision. Releasing three Japanese recordings, *Dreamboat, Picadilly Square,* and *The Dark Side Of Dewey* (Alfa Records) prepared Allen for the task of composing and selecting musicians for his critically acclaimed Atlantic debut, *The Pursuer.* Combining hypnotic melodies with the pulse of Art Blakey and the sound of flowing, seamless arrangements, *The Pursuer* was the culmination of Allen's musical, marketing, and spiritual vision.

Testimonial, Allen's new Atlantic release, returns him to his past to create his present. The theme of a gospel church meeting resounds throughout the recording, interspersed with a straight-ahead allure recalling *The Pursuer.* Some may see Allen's reveling in his gospel roots as a step away from the security of his successful bop-styled debut, but Carl is a stubborn individual, following his own vision wherever it leads.

Allen's view towards life is summed up on his answering machine message. Over an a Cappella gospel choir, Allen encourages the listener to "make it a great day" and "please, please...yes, please, keep swinging."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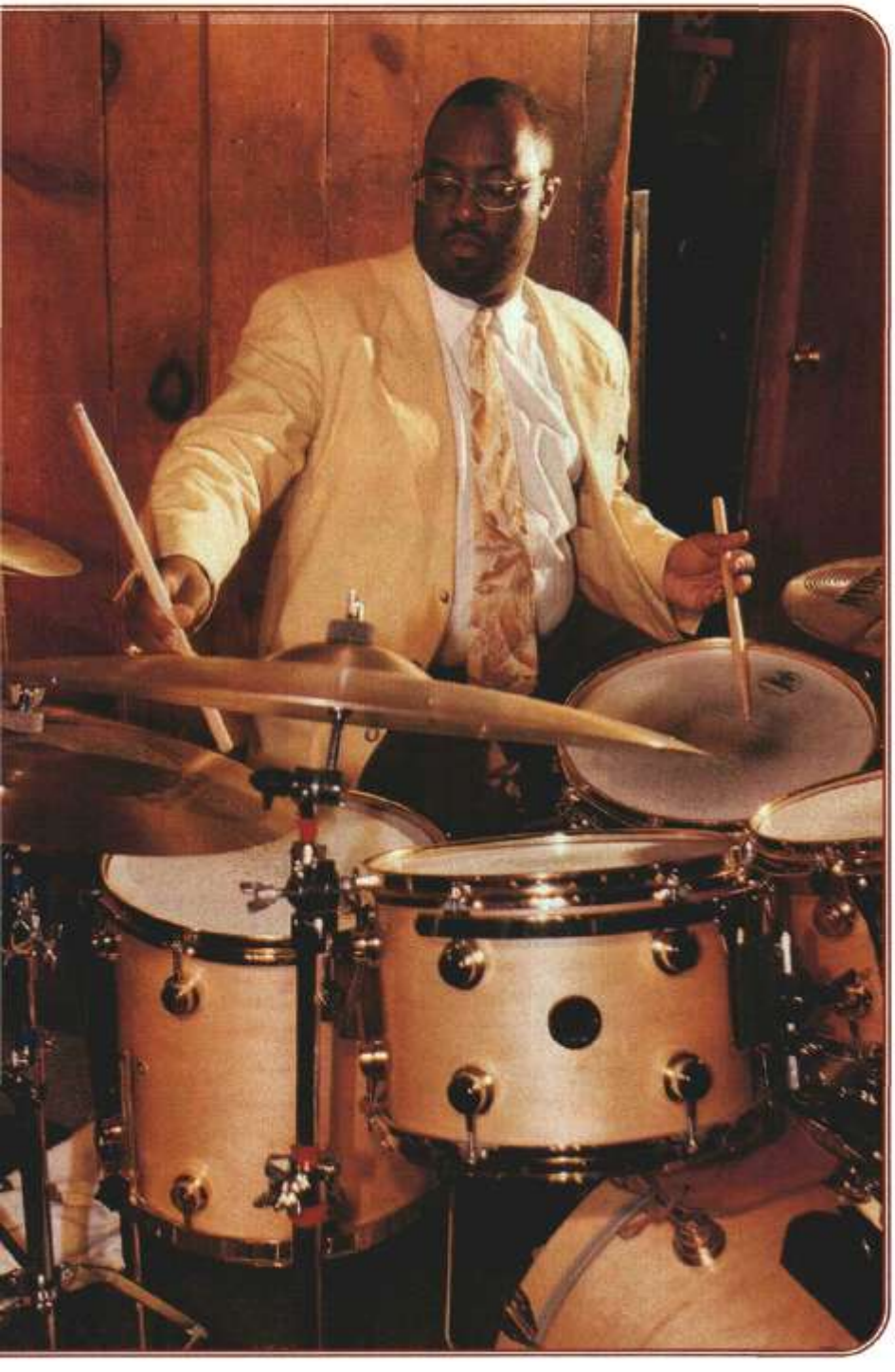
KM: What struck me about your playing the other night at Bradley's with Geoff Keezer, as well as when I saw you with Freddie Hubbard back in 1984, is your drive. Whether playing loudly or softly, you really concentrate your energy in the rhythm. Have you always had that?

CA: It's not something that I've consciously thought about. I've been made more aware of it over the last several years because I've really been into Art Blakey. He's always been a hero of mine, but as I've matured as a player I've been better able to understand his approach and his concept.

I remember shortly after I got the gig with Freddie, we were playing at the Blue Note, and after a set one night Art asked me, [adopts a gravelly tone of voice] "What are you afraid of?" I said, "What do you mean?" He asked again, "What are you afraid of?" I said, "Just a big phone bill. What are you talking about?" "Well," Art said, "hit the drums. Don't play like you're scared. If you break 'em, come to my house and I'll give you some new ones." Aft was saying that drums are meant to be *played.* That really opened my eyes. It has nothing to do with volume, it has to do with presence.

KM: At times with Keezer you were really plowing ahead.

CA: I like the music to always be moving forward, although it's not just my responsibility. There is an adage that says the drummer is in the driver's seat.



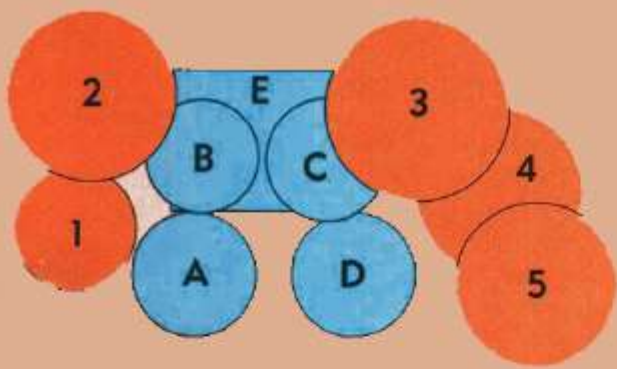
"As a musician, you're in business for yourself, so you have to understand marketing. It's important to be out there all the time. Art Blakey used to say you're either appearing or you're disappearing,"

However, it's important to make sure that you're an integral part of what's happening musically. That means the drummer shouldn't be the only one propelling the music.

This music is about a democracy—you have to see where the music is going and sometimes follow *it.* That holds true in most cases as opposed to trying to force a direction. Then you can lay in the cut and be driven. Sometimes I want to be chauffeured around.

KM: You have a very artistic approach to playing the toms and cymbals and in the way you phrase ideas. The other

The Pursuer's Kit



Drumset: DW in natural oil maple finish
A. 5½ x14 wood snare (will occasionally use an additional 5 x 13 snare to the left of the hi-hat)
B. 8x 12 tom
C. 9 x 13 tom
D. 14 x 14 floor tom
E. 14 x 18 bass drum

Hardware: All DW, Rhythm Tech bells and tambourines, H.Q. Percussion *Real Feel* practice pads, Protechtor cases, Shure microphones, and Roc-N-Soc thrones

Cymbals: Sabian
1. 14" HH hi-hats (with *Duo* cymbal used for top hi-hat)
2. 20" HH mini-bell prototype with three rivets
3. 22" HH jazz ride with four rivets
4. 20" HH *Duo* ride
5. 18" HH extra-thin crash

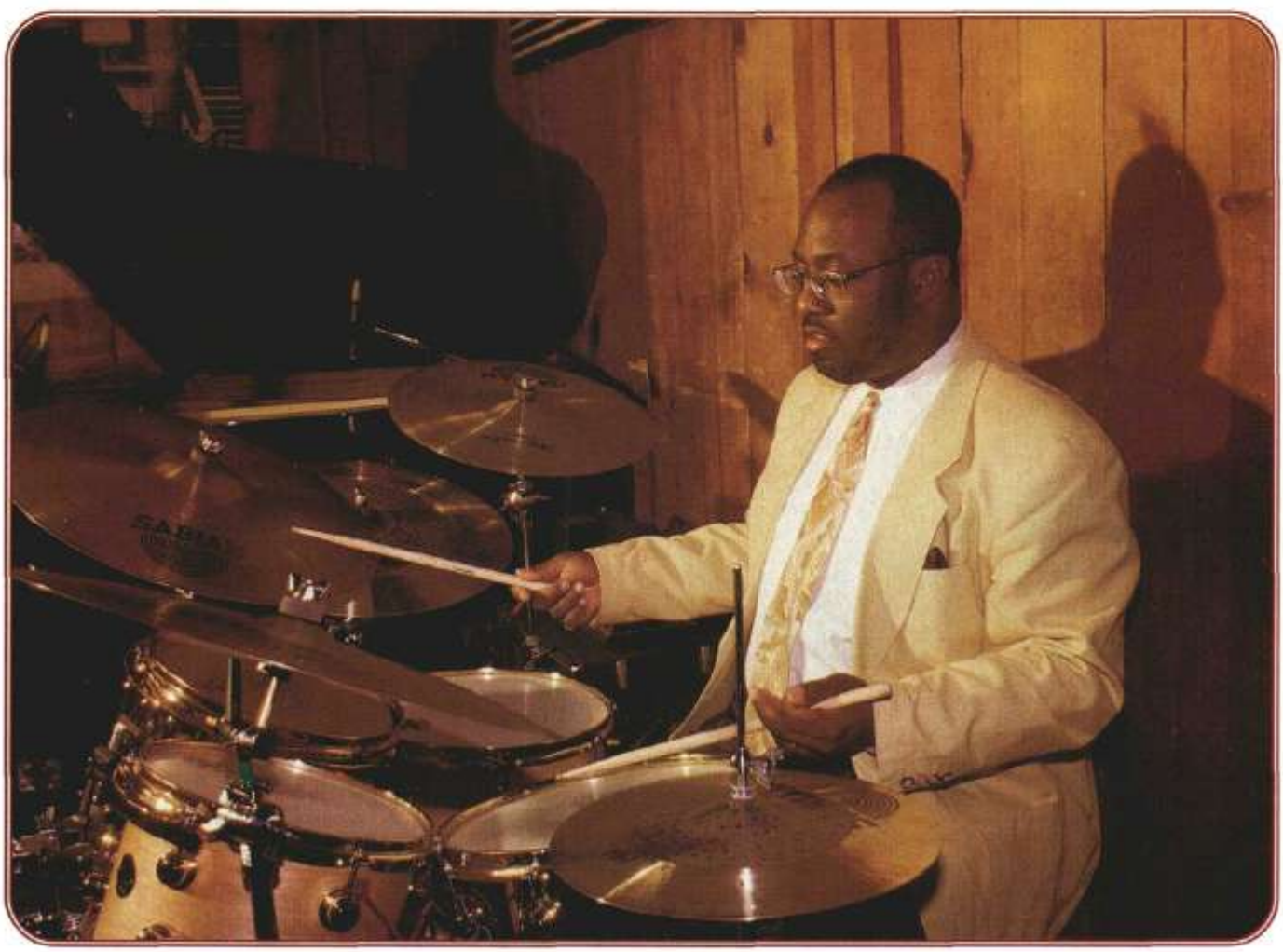
Heads: Evans

Sticks: Calato (Regal) *8A* model sticks, brushes, and #6 *Saul Goodman* timpani mallets

night you were rubbing the cymbals during quiet sections, back-sticking like Papa Jo Jones in places, muting the cymbals and toms with your sticks....

CA: Blakey taught me that getting the sound that you hear in your head—in any way that you can—is what is important. I don't think in terms of looking cute or being flashy, I think in terms of how I can best articulate what I'm hearing in my head.

There are certain things I do that might be considered unorthodox, but the music is always first on my mind. One of the things I like that some people say is a no-no is hitting the crash cymbal



without the bass drum. Roy Haynes does it all the time and it sounds great.

The other night at Bradley's I was hearing so much Roy Haynes, I couldn't get it out of my head. He's another big idol of mine. Coming up as a kid, I wanted to play saxophone. I had started banging on the drums, but I figured that if I played the saxophone I could get a few more girlfriends. With the tenor, I thought, I could serenade women on the beach, you know? And all this at eight years old! Never mind that I didn't know my way to the beach or that you had to play clarinet before going on to a sax.

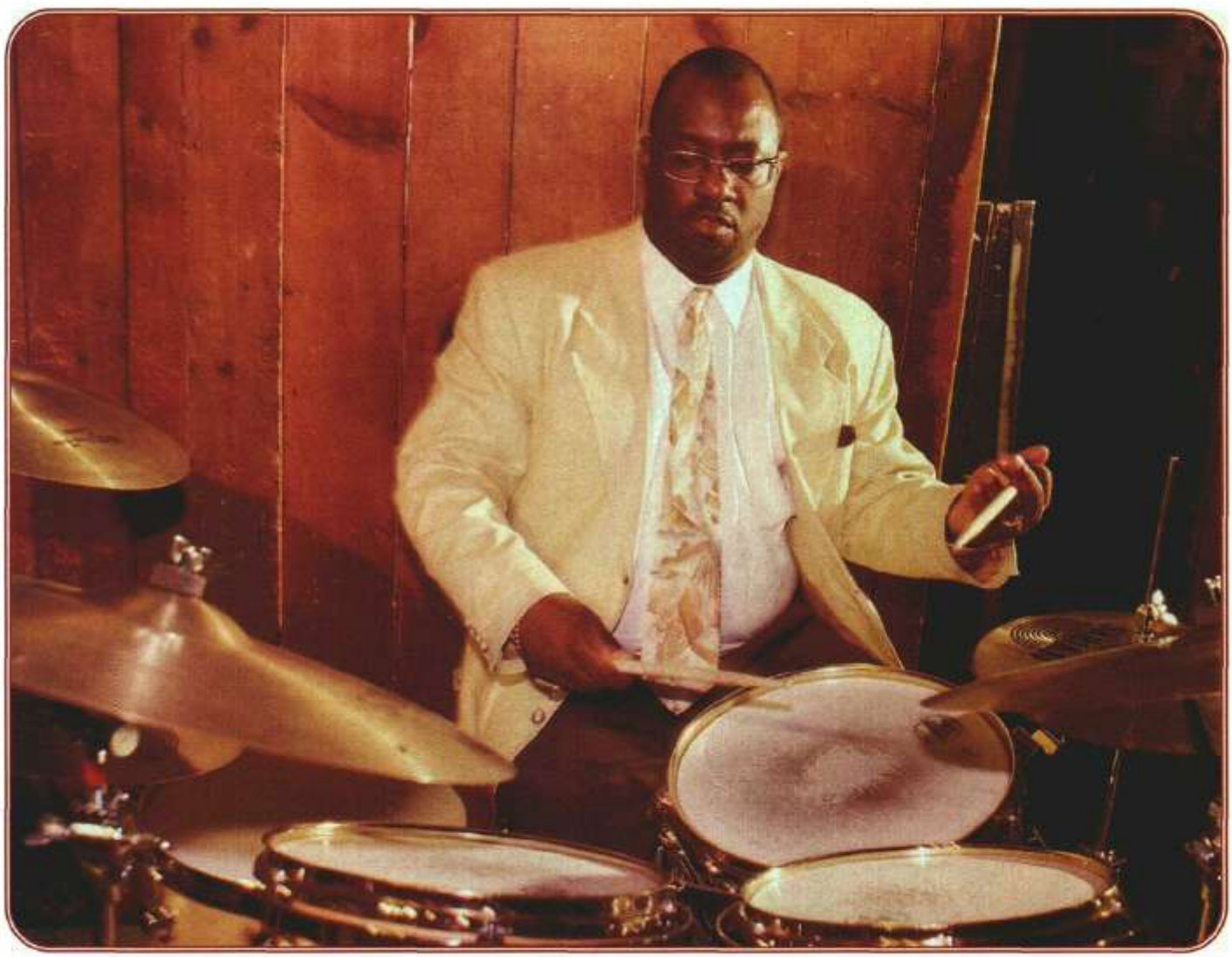
I grew up in the projects with brothers who had a serious reputation for being able to take care of themselves. They sat me down and said, "Listen, we've built up the family name and we're not going to have you mess it up by playing clarinet." To them that was a sissy instrument. They steered me back to the drums.

KM: Did you grow up listening to jazz?

CA: I grew up in a musical family. We never considered categories, it was just all music. I heard jazz as I got older. At that time I was listening to groups like Kool & the Gang and the Jazz Crusaders, who were more jazz-oriented. Harmonically, they had some other stuff happening. My mother was and is a gospel singer, so we heard that and the music of the day, and the fusion stuff too. Billy Cobham was my first big influence.

One of the joys of listening to and studying different styles of music is to put on a hip-hop record or Black Street with Teddy Riley and hear something that they do that you can do when you're swinging. All of the people in my generation grew up listening to R&B and gospel music, but a lot of us want to come off as if we've been jazz heads since we were three months old. In most cases that is not the deal.

KM: But your use of the nuances of jazz drumming implies that you're more



"You can get into *a* state of 'comfortability' with your playing, Comfortability leads to complacency. Complacency leads to incompetence. That's not something I want to be a part of."

deeply immersed in the music than some other drummers.

CA: I believe in being a serious student. I spent a lot of time studying all the masters, watching videos, talking to people. Of course I listened to the music, but that was just one component of my education.

KM: You play things that come from different genres than bop. For instance, how'd you develop your back-sticking technique?

CA: When I was thirteen I began playing in a drum & bugle corps. We did a lot of cross-sticking. And if you watch old video footage of Chick Webb, Baby Dodds, Sid Catlett, or Papa Joe Jones, they had all of that stuff down, but the music was never sacrificed. Those cats would swing you into bad health, and at the same time they'd be twirling sticks and doing all sorts of things. And they'd be smiling while they were doing it.

KM: The drum corps explains your extensive rudimental chops and your energy.

CA: It also comes out of my love for classical percussion and Max Roach, who comes out of what was then considered military-style drumming.

I remember the first time I had an encounter with Max: "Oh Max, Mr. Roach, Mr. M'Boom, what do you practice?" He said, "Singles and doubles." I'm standing

there with my mouth still open, "And what else?" We went through that about four times and he finally looked at me like I was from Mars. He said, "Listen man, everything you play is a single, a double, or a multiple bounce."

Then we went on to talk about rudiments, which was very important to me because I was going through a transitional phase of my life. I was about twenty-one, and having just arrived in New York, I was concerned about what was considered "hip." Do you abandon what you've already learned to become New York hip, or do you continue to study what you've been doing and make it fit? I had come from the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay, where I was studying classical music, and I was just changing over to a jazz major at William Paterson College. I always loved classical and jazz, but people always made me feel like I had to choose. As you get older and start to mature you realize it doesn't need to be that restricted.

KM: Maybe the classical training contributes to your touch, which is very refined, almost fluid.

CA: I appreciate that, but it's not something I've really thought about. A lot of drummers make comments about it, even non-traditional drummers. Last fall I was performing in Japan and Dave Weckl was on the bill with us, and he complimented me on my touch, and he has a great touch. I just want to have the command on the instrument to be able to do what's necessary.

KM: Instead of breaking up a phrase with accents between the snare and bass drum, often you'll phrase an idea over the whole kit, with your limbs in unison, and many times phrasing it over the bar line.

CA: That comes from studying other instruments and musicians. I often wonder what it would have been like to play with Thelonious Monk, who was very percussive. He did what are called double stops, but with both hands. So I'll try to re-create the sounds I've heard other instrumentalists do.

Early on in my stint with Freddie Hubbard he said, "People try to figure out where my stuff comes from, and they can't because they only listen to trumpet players. But I got my stuff from saxophone players." I really marveled at that concept. Being able to take Monk, or Sonny Rollins, or Clifford Brown and apply that approach to the drumset is an interesting endeavor.

KM: Playing "Jackieing" with Geoff and "Evidence" with Vincent Herring—both Monk tunes—you really respond well. The fours on "Evidence" are particularly modern, closer to Tony Williams than Ben Riley, You sound really comfortable with Monk.

CA: Well, I love Monk. But the other thing is I always try to be cognizant of the hookup between drums and piano as well as the relationship between drums and bass. Also, I really try to be true to a particular approach. I want to do the music justice.

With the bass and drums it's right hand versus right hand. In other words, it's your right hand on the cymbal against his right-handed pulse on the strings while he's walking. With the piano, it's my left hand comping on the snare while the pianist is comping chords on the piano, in terms of rhythm. It's a rhythmic thing between piano and drums and a pulse thing between drums and bass.

KM: Your answers are concise and articulate, like you've given a lot of thought to the music.

CA: I'm always thinking about a number of things. It just never ends. As I grow a little wiser, subject matter comes and goes with respect to its importance. I read quite a bit. I'm a magazine fanatic, and it takes me a long time to finish books. My favorite book is the Bible. And I love business, I'm a business fiend.

I have a production company with my best friend, Vincent Herring, called Big Apple Productions. We've produced records by artists including Pharoah Sanders, Lee Konitz, Phil Woods, Dewey

Testifying

Here are the albums Carl says are most representative of his drumming...

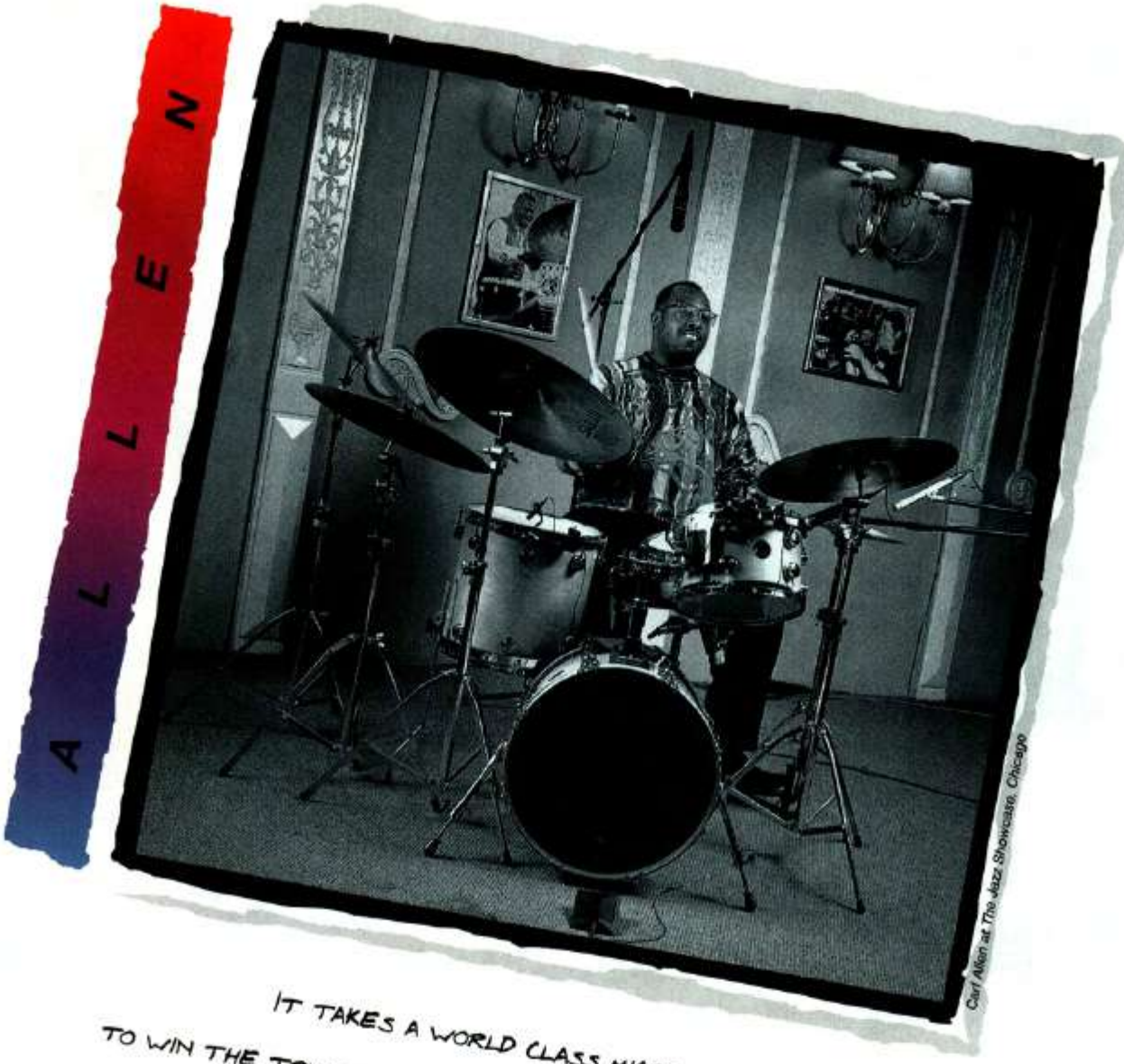
Artist	Album	Label
Carl Allen	The Pursuer	Atlantic
Carl Allen	Testimonial	Atlantic
Vincent Herring	Evidence	Landmark
Vincent Herring	Live At The Vanguard	Musicmasters
Vincent Herring	Don't Let It Go	Musicmasters
Don Braden	The Time Is Now	Crisscross
Don Braden	After Dark	Crisscross
Don Braden	Wish List	Crisscross
Freddie Hubbard/Woody Shaw	Double Take	Blue Note
Freddie Hubbard/Woody Shaw	Eternal Triangle	Blue Note
Benny Green	Testifyin'	Blue Note
Woody Shaw	Imagination	Muse
Jackie McLean	The Jackie Mac Attack Live	Verve
Javon Jackson	The Time Is Right	Blue Note
Harrison/Blanchard	Black Pearl	Columbia

...and here are the ones Carl says he listens to most for inspiration.

Artist	Album (Label)	Drummer
Art Blakey	Free For All (Blue Note)	Art Blakey
Red Garland	The Garland Of Red (Prestige)	Art Taylor
John Coltrane	Ballads (Impulse)	Elvin Jones
Phineas Newborn	Harlem Blues (Contemporary)	Elvin Jones
Phineas Newborn	Please Send Me Someone To Love (Contemporary)	Elvin Jones
Ahmad Jamal	Live At The Pershing (Chess)	Vernel Fournier
Duke Pearson	Sweet Honeybee (Blue Note)	Mickey Roker
Grant Green	Matador (Blue Note)	Elvin Jones

also...

Ed Blackwell with Don Cherry and Ornette Coleman,
All the eras of Miles Davis with Jack DeJohnette, Tony Williams, and Philly Joe Jones,
Maurice White with Ramsey Lewis, Alphonse Mouzon, Eric Gravatt with McCoy Tyner,
Chick Webb big band, Papa Jo Jones with Duke Ellington,
Sonny Greer to Sonny Payne to Shadow Wilson



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Redman, Gyras Chestnut, and several others. The production company is an extension of my philosophy, which comes, in part, from Art Blakey. He said you have to reach out and help young people. We started the company because we were fed up with seeing certain artists overlooked for reasons that had nothing to do with music. You had people at record companies signing musicians who couldn't play, so we decided to do something about it. It's just about trying to give opportunities to people who wouldn't get a chance if it was left to traditional record companies.

KM: It seems that the young jazz musicians are finally finding their own way.

CA: It takes time. You have to figure out what works. I remember Miles used to talk about music being like clothes or clothes being like a menu, in the sense that you may want something on the menu but it doesn't really fit you. You have to observe some things from afar. With respect to developing your own sound, there are some things you will naturally gravitate towards, and some that you won't.

I really believe that everyone naturally comes from a particular branch of the musical tree. As much as I love Max, I could never sound just like Max. I've tried transcribing his stuff, but every time I play the notes it comes out sounding more like Art, Elvin, or Tony. I have a natural musical kinship with those guys. It's difficult for an artist to sound like everybody.

KM: It does seem that a jazz renaissance is happening, with Jacky Terrason, Leon Parker, Cyrus Chestnut, Christian McBride....

CA: This is one thing I have a beef with. A lot of those things are created by writers and critics and marketing people. Cyrus has always been able to play. He's had his approach for a long time, but it's just now that someone has decided to write about it.

I remember when Leon was saying he didn't want to use a hi-hat. I thought that was cool, but that he had to be aware that there were certain guys who he just wouldn't be playing with. That's how it is. I'm glad he stuck with that and developed his own style. It's funny when people say these guys have "finally arrived." No, *you've* just arrived. They've been here.

Part of the problem within the record industry is that you have white-collar workers trying to run a blue-collar business. Jazz is a blue-collar business, I don't care how sophisticated you want it to be. You have a number of people making very critical decisions without the knowledge, the experience, or the know-how—too many decisions being made based on personal likes and dislikes, friendships, favoritism, nepotism.... It's disturbing to see the power some people have, which is often misplaced power.

KM: Would you agree that Wynton Marsalis has helped to create a climate conducive to marketing jazz?

CA: Wynton and I have talked about this. His perspective is that in rap and other styles of music, even the sad cats get record deals, so why not in jazz? But when they're only giving out a limited number of deals, let's look at who's worthy. I do understand marketing. It is important, to a degree, for a person to have a look, to have a vibe, a presentation. There are some musicians who are great, but not charismatic. Some folks have to be won over by one's charm.

KM: So how did you decide to market yourself?

U'RE IN GOOD COMPANY.

It's easy to think of a drum company as a business that merely makes a product. But since a company is actually defined as a group of people gathered together for a common purpose, you could call the drummers at left a kind of big, worldwide drum company because even though their styles may differ from one another they all share the goal of expanding, improving and redefining the modern art of drumming.

At Drum Workshop, although we're definitely one of the world's smaller drum companies, we deeply believe that the growth of drumming is a goal that can be shared whether you're playing drums or making them. Advancing the art is our main mission and over the years our reputation has been built by understanding that the best way to be a company for drummers is to be a company of drummers. So, from our president, vice-president and management to many of the people who work in production, shipping and sales, that's exactly what we are. The fact that we're a drum company created and run by drummers explains why we're as dedicated to making the finest drums, pedals, hardware and accessories as drummers are to playing them. And it also explains why there's something else these and more and more of the world's top players have in common: they all play DW. Which means that no matter how you define the word "company" when you play DW you're not just keeping time with the best, you're keeping company with the best, too.

Shown above (from left to right) are DW's "Vintage" Brass, "Collector's" 10-ply Maple, "American Classic" Solid Maple and "Edge" Brass & Maple Snare Drums, the 5000AH "Accelerator" Off-Set Chain & Sprocket Single Bass Drum Pedal featuring the "Delta" Tri-Bearing System and a variety of 9000 Series Cymbal, Snare Drum and Tom-Tom Stands.

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DeGrasso

CA: As a musician, you're in business for yourself, so you have to understand marketing. It's important to be out there all the time. Art Blakey used to say you're either appearing or you're disappearing.

There was a very strategic plan for me. I think there are natural leaders and then you have folks who are great followers. I've always been a self-starter, a self-motivator, and very aggressive about what it is that I want to do. I've never believed in waiting for someone to bring me what I want. I figure out what I want and then figure out how to attain it. That's what *The Pursuer* is all about.

As a drummer there were certain limitations put on me by the musical community. And being a leader involves more than just being able to write and play—you have to be a personality. That was my objective in doing clinics: to put my name out there so that I wasn't always associated with so-and-so's band. Clinics have allowed me to establish my own identity, from stores to schools, to being a guest soloist in schools with my own band, on an established circuit. I knew I had to do something different from a horn player.

KM: Can you explain the process that occurs that enables a particular drummer to become the choice for recording sessions? Lewis Nash seems particularly busy these days.

CA: Lewis is an incredible drummer. He has the knack of being able to make music his own very quickly. That makes engineers and producers like you. But there is no secret that once you get on a roll, people want a piece of you.

It also comes from a choice you make. Lewis goes on the road, but he likes to be at home as well. It's tough for me—I'm going out tomorrow, but I'll be away from my family. And also, if you're on a successful record, producers will want your name for that drawing power.

KM: You play counter rhythms and cross rhythms very effectively. How would one develop that? Many jazz drummers of this era are more traditional; they won't play phrases over the bar line, for example.

CA: I don't let the bar line restrict me. When I think in terms of phrases I think of extended phrases, of bar lines as perforated bar lines. I know they're there but I don't have to stop and start with them. That gives me the freedom to hear ideas of more than four beats, if you're in a 4/4 bar.

KM: And you break them up around the set.

CA: That comes from Elvin and Ed Blackwell. I just want to have the freedom to play what I hear with, hopefully, the good sense that it will fit conceptually. For instance, if I'm trading fours in 4/4, I don't necessarily think of it as four bars, but as sixteen beats. So I can play a 5/4 bar, a 4/4 bar, a 3/4 bar, and a 4/4 bar, and it's still going to be sixteen beats—it's up to me. That helps propel the music, but it's not always suitable.

Something I learned from Dexter Gordon, Miles, and Monk is how they would create illusions with time. They'd play behind the beat or ahead of the beat, giving the illusion that the time was stretching or being condensed. But the quarter remained the same and the music was still swinging. That's really what I try to do when I play. It's about creating images and illusions.

KM: From record to record you play differently. On *The Jackie Mac Attack* [with alto saxophonist Jackie McLean] you're

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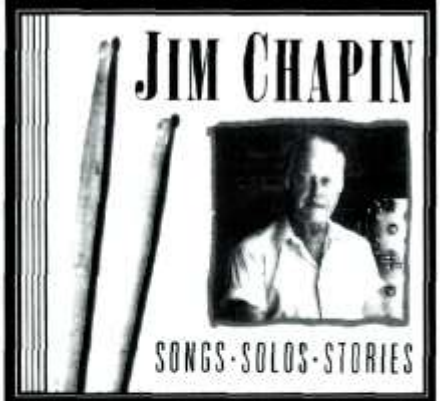

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very aggressive; on Vincent Herring's records you're more artistic.

CA: Jackie, Freddie Hubbard, and George Coleman are very drum-oriented players. If nothing else is happening in the band, the drummer's got to be happening. With Jackie and Freddie we'd play a lot of duos. That builds stamina and makes you think in other ways. Since they're drum-oriented they like to hear different rhythms, so I approach the music more rhythmically. But I try to play differently with everybody because everyone is different.

KM: Your playing in Benny Green's trio didn't work to your advantage. Was that a restrictive environment, even with Christian McBride on the gig?

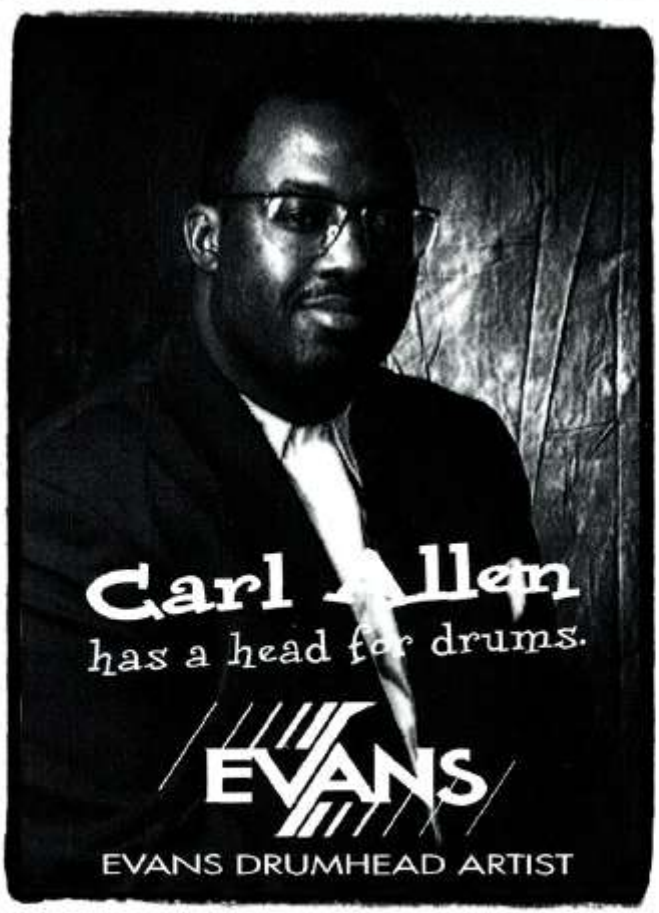
CA: In the beginning we had some growing pains in that, conceptually, we felt pretty boxed in. Benny's concept of trio playing was different than mine. I didn't really have a lot of experience playing trio, but I listened to Phineas Newborn with Elvin and trio records by Ahmad Jamal and Ramsey Lewis, and I saw this broad spectrum of trio playing. Benny's view was more into one area, which I learned to appreciate as we grew as a trio. But there were certain things I was not allowed to do. But I love Benny and I cherished that opportunity. It helped to open up my whole concept of music in general.

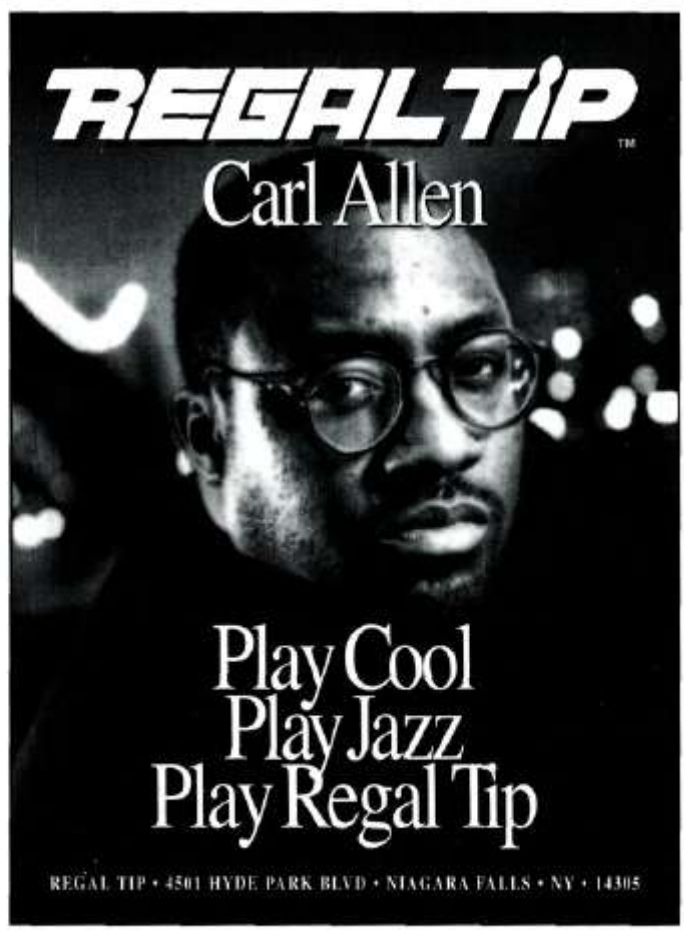
KM: Your style is inclusive of styles outside of traditional jazz drumming.

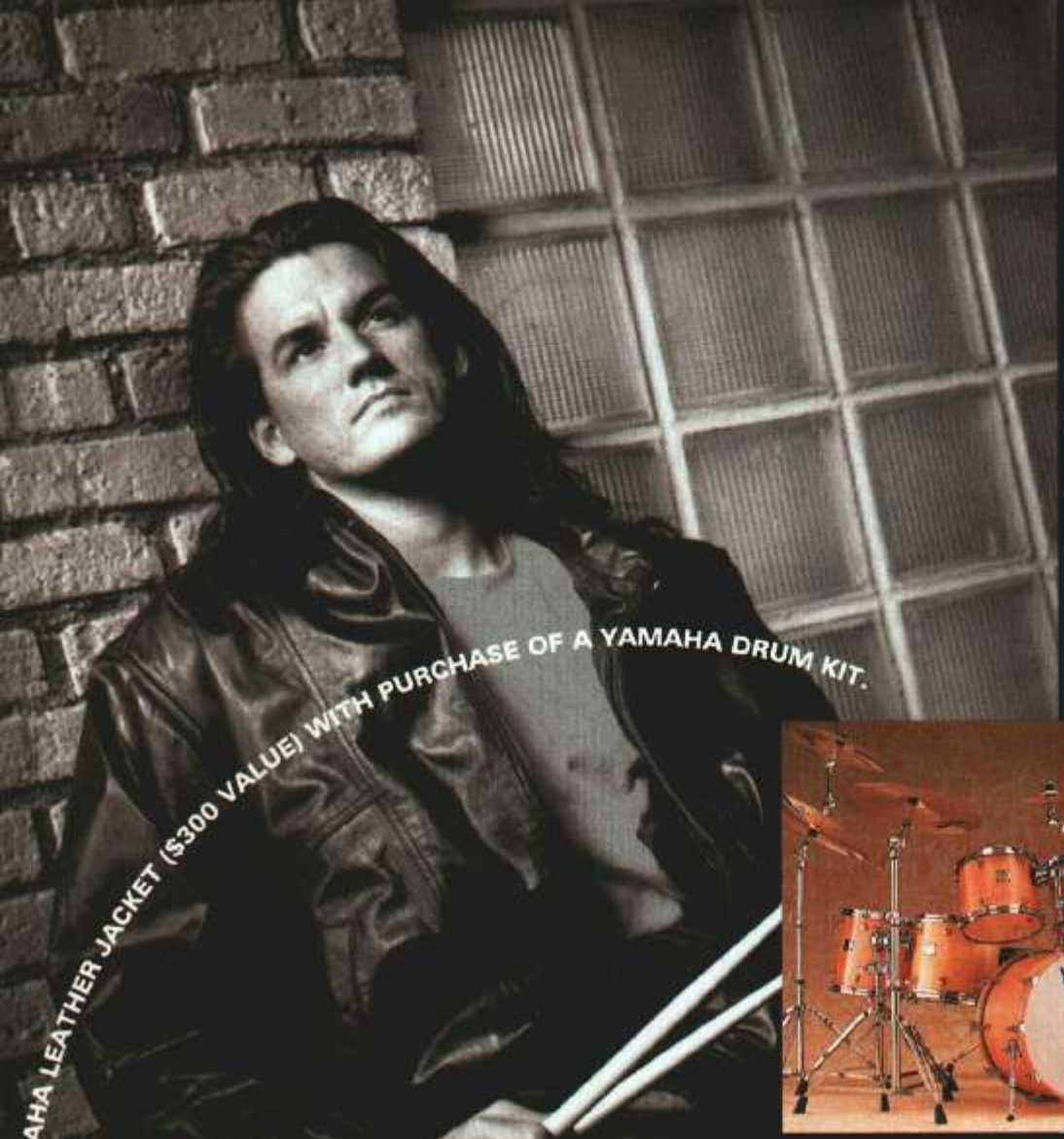
CA: One of the goals of any jazz drummer is to find his own voice. In doing so you check out several things. And as they're applicable to a menu, some things work for you, some things don't.

Back in ' 87 I did a tour of Japan with Terence Blanchard and Donald Harrison. I did a drum battle with Lewis Nash and Ignacio Berroa. Ed Blackwell was there but they hadn't included him. How can you have a drum battle and not include Blackwell? So we brought him out, and he had so much independence we all were dizzy by the time he finished. He used to talk about inverting rhythms. He'd have four different things going on simultaneously. He would play one rhythm with one hand and with the other hand reverse that rhythm. And with his feet he would play different tempos—on each foot!

So I like to try to take rhythms and invert them. Sometimes I'll write out a rhythm







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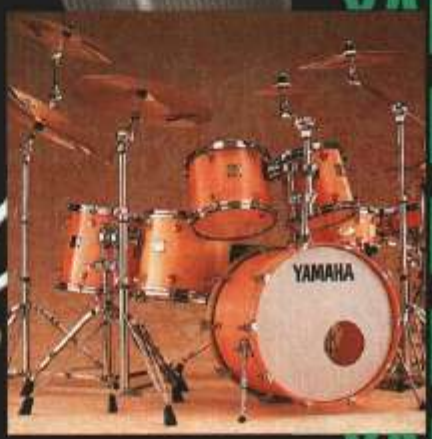

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and then splice it up to elongate it or condense it. If I have a rhythm that is six beats long I'll make it nine beats long by inserting rests or extending a note. That creates different illusions. It's all about trying to become timeless.

Roy Haynes plays that way. I listen to records he did with Mary Lou Williams, Charlie Parker, Miles, Monk, and Coltrane, and more recently with Pat Metheny and Chick Corea, and he still sounds so modern. His playing is timeless. I don't think his approach has really changed that much over the last fifty years. I listen to those trio records with Chick and the stuff on his new album and it's the same. But not the same like normal mortals like myself playing the same stuff, which gets to sounding stale after a while. Roy sounds fresh every time. He's still snap, crackle, pop.

KM: You spoke of elongating phrases, which I hear in your playing when you stretch long counter-rhythms over the bar line.

CA: Well, my playing is like my personality. I don't want to become predictable. When they think they have me pegged, I'll change. I like to do that on the bandstand. You can get into a state of "comfortability" with your playing. Comfortability leads to complacency. Complacency leads to incompetence. That's not something I want to be a part of. I like when cats are spontaneous, but not when cats play licks and everyone has to jump on the bandwagon and play the same licks to show how hip they are because they heard it. Sometimes it's cool.

If I play an obvious rhythm that we all know, then one of the other musicians will probably end the phrase. So I'll try to change up the familiar with something of my own, maybe take an old phrase and invert it so the end becomes the beginning of something fresh. That leaves the other musicians exposed and keeps them on their toes.

When you spend some time with the masters they will tell you it's not all about what you play but what you *don't* play. The "silence is golden" theory—that's what creates an intensity and an atmosphere for expectation and surprise. When I first started with Freddie he used to tell me I had to learn to play with more intensity. So I played louder, but he said volume has nothing to do with intensity. He wouldn't tell me what to do, though. That was the most rewarding but most frustrating endeavor I had during that period. I was in a maze, walking in the dark. I knew there was a way out but I had nothing to guide me. As I explored I started to see some light. You learn the value of self-exploration instead of someone just giving it to you on a plate.

Freddie would tell me to check out Connie Kay, Philly Joe Jones, Billy Higgins.. .and he would name cats who I thought were in one category like Connie Kay, who was quiet, then Philly Joe and Blakey, who played loud. That forced me to check out everything.

KM: How do you reference such varying styles of drummers and then apply it to yourself?

CA: What you want to do is create an intimate relationship with the music so you can internalize it and then incorporate that as you feel you need it. We often forget that drumming is a language. You learn how to create phrases and become a part of a conversation so that you can know how to interject and relate as well as change the

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direction of that conversation. If I'd only checked out Elvin, my vocabulary and dialog would be limited, although very powerful. I want to be able to converse on many levels. You want to hear as many things as possible so that when the direction of the conversation changes, you can be a part of it.

KM: You're also interested in playing Weather Report-style jazz?

CA: Vincent Herring and some friends want to do a project playing other styles of music. It's an outlet for us to play music we love that won't really fit in our individual settings. We call it the Agenda.

KM: Who do you listen to now?

CA: It goes from Ed Blackwell to Paul Motian to Mel Lewis. Mel was an influence on me. When I was eighteen in Green Bay he came through with his group. He was looking for a drummer for Basie, but I knew I wasn't ready. He said I had to get out of Green Bay. Mel was so funny. He was very opinionated.

Mel was the first cat to teach me the role of the bass drum. When I was younger I had band directors telling me to play the bass drum on all four beats, and I thought that wasn't hip. I thought I knew everything. But when I saw Mel with his band, they were swinging, and I felt this boom-boom-boom. I thought somebody was stomping his foot. Then I realized it was Mel's bass drum. He said you have to play the bass drum so it's felt more than heard. That acts as a focal point not only for you but for the band. If you've got a cat with sad time, he's going to feel that bass drum presence. That opened my eyes to a lot of stuff.

People ask me if I took lessons from those masters. Well, those *were* my lessons. Sometimes I would see Blakey and he would say a couple of words to me that would keep my head buzzing for six months. I feel very blessed. Without those guys I would probably be doing something else.

KM: How did Freddie Hubbard and Jackie McLean affect you as a drummer and composer?

CA: They were both drum-oriented players. I was so intimidated—these cats could have called anybody for the gig. When I look at the records that they made, they had the drummers that I idolized. What can I do to contribute to the lineage? I learned that when those cats came to the bandstand, they came to play.

KM: Your new release, *Testimonial,* is a left turn from *The Pursuer.* The melodies are similar, but it's more of a gospel/bop record. Even some of the drumming in the interludes sounds like a gospel drummer in a church service. Were you trying to affect something?

CA: When you're listening to music, would you rather feel something or think about it? As a player, would you want your audience to feel something or react intellectually?

KM: Initially, to feel something.

CA: When you make them feel, it's also going to make them think. If you make them feel good, they'll try to re-create the sensation so they can get back to it. The interludes on the record were placed to make people feel something and to make that connection between jazz and gospel. It's not a gospel record; it's a jazz record with gospel overtones.

People tell me they listen to this disc and it brings back memories of when they were growing up. I like to hear that. It's about making that connection. That's what it's all about. I'm trying to connect the dots, to make a picture out of this puzzle.

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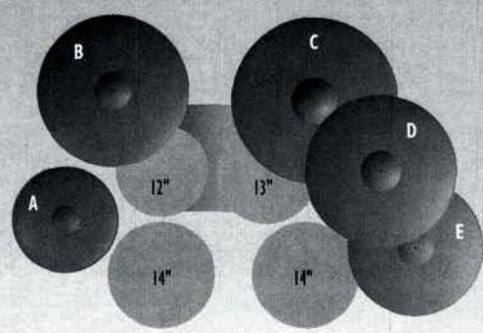

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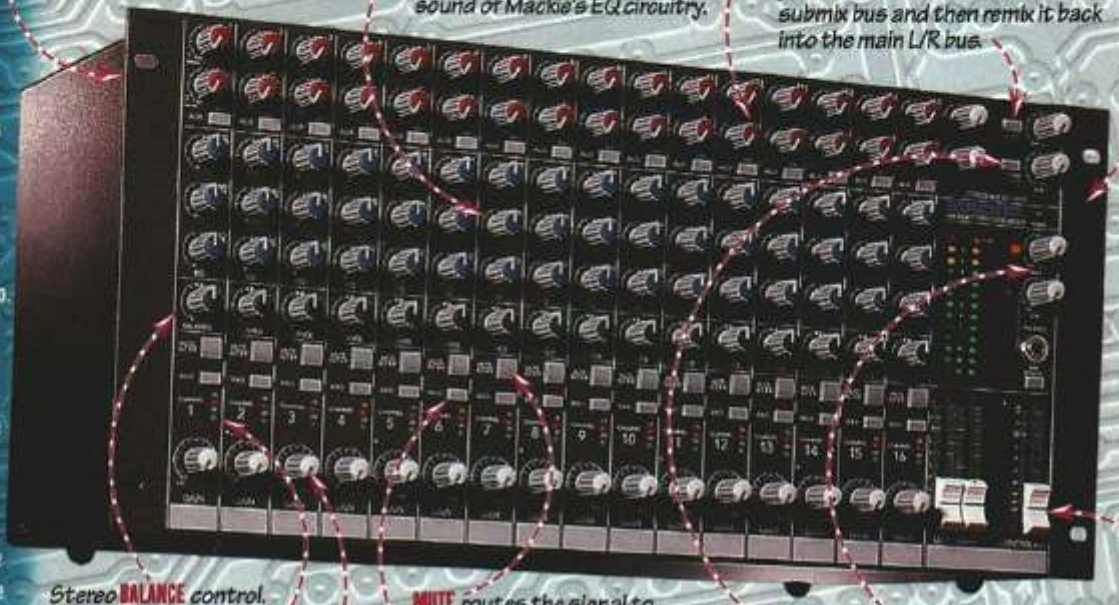

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INSIDE: All those goodies that set Mackie apart from the clones... double-sided thru-hole-plated fiberglass main circuit board, gold-plated internal interconnects, exceptionally high RFI rejection input design and much more.

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MUTE routes the signal to the **ALT 3-4** stereo bus.

Stereo **IN-PLACE SOLO** maintains stereo perspective including effects; also meters individual channel level on 13-LED ladder.

SOLO & **HEADPHONE** level controls.

AUX RETURN TO CONTROL ROOM button sends Aux 4 to headphone & monitor buses so you can "wet monitor" or play along with a cue or click feed.

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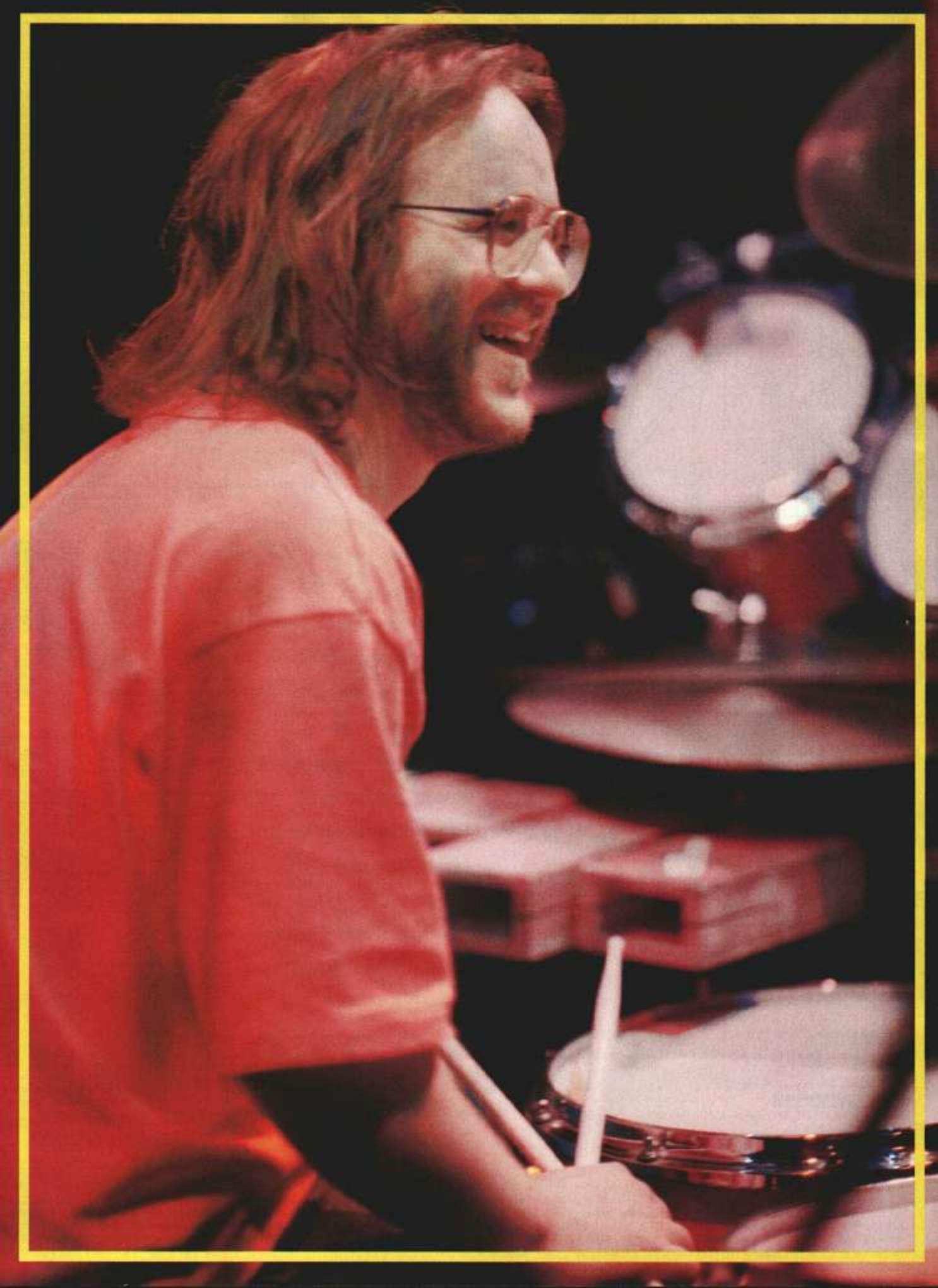


JON "FISH" FISHMAN:

PHISH'S PHEARLESS PERFORMER

What do you make of a guy who insists on performing in a dress and safety goggles? In Jon Fishman's case it's forgivable, because if you look beneath the scaly surface you'll find an inventive player who's holding down one of the most interesting gigs in rock—Phish.

For those not in the know, Phish—which also features Trey Anastasio on guitar, Mike Gordon on bass, and Page McConnell on keyboards—is a band that has managed to attract a large and loyal following based on a combination of style-jumping music and an outrageous live show. And while sales of their first five studio releases have not been in the millions, Phish's touring success has been phenomenal. Their last tour saw the band perform seventy dates to more than 315,000 people, including sold-out shows at Madison Square Garden and Boston Garden.

Fishman's penchant for strange stage dress and behavior is indicative of his somewhat unusual yet always creative approach to the drums. Virtually untrained, Jon has followed his own muse, coming up with a unique playing perspective. His skewed percussive concepts are without question one of the main reasons Phish has had a steady and successful climb. (Besides, you've got to love a guy who has the unadulterated gall to accompany a cover version of Neil Diamond's "Cracklin' Rosie" by prancing around on stage playing marching cymbals—or whose solo spot has him blowing and sucking weird noises from a vacuum cleaner's nozzle!)

But don't get the impression that Fishman is some carnival sideshow act—this guy can play. He must be able to, considering Phish's challenging broad spectrum of music, which ranges from odd meter, Zappa-esque arrangements to earthy, traditional bluegrass. This diversity, as well as the band's love of extended free-form jamming, is obvious all over their new concert disc, A Live One, which they hope will reveal some of the bizarre and wonderful magic of their show. It takes a creative weirdo with good chops to cut this gig, and Jon Fishman is the right man for the job.

BY WILLIAM F. MILLER

WFM: The hippest thing about Phish musically is all of the different styles the band plays. Would you say that handling those different styles is the biggest challenge of working in this band?

JF: Yes, it's a challenge, but it's also a big reason why I think the band is going to last. We're not trying to play lots of styles for the sake of playing styles. We do it because we're trying to get better at a lot of different things that we're bad at. [laughs]

"When I go on stage in a frock I'm able to take the music seriously, but I can't take *myself* seriously."

There is just so much good music out there. It would be foolish to ignore any of it. If you listen to jazz, bluegrass, rock, reggae, Latin—and all of the subheadings of styles contained in each—you'll find so much to be inspired by. And it seems that we're able to hear more and more of it here in the States now than ever before.

WFM: But most bands seem to fall into a certain style, which makes them a known quantity for their fans and for the music industry. Is being a musically diverse band a negative as well as a positive for Phish?

JF: I think it can be both. That's the discussion that the band always ends up coming back to. On one hand, we try to push our limits by getting better at other styles of music, hoping it brings more depth and richness to our original material. But the argument against that is that we'll never become particularly good at any one thing. It's a bit of a dilemma.

Bluegrass is something that I've become really enthusiastic about over the last five years. I've found that the traditionalists in that kind of music are just hard-core. They stick to certain rules. On one hand, it's limiting. On the other hand, you get the straight beauty of the music. It's not covered up with flashiness. To Bill Monroe, the grandfather of bluegrass music, bluegrass had to stay pure. But if that was the only way the world of music could go, then you'd never have Bela Fleck. Bela has become a great master of that traditional form, but he's also gone way beyond it, incorporating all sorts of other things with it. *[Fleck has guested on Phish studio discs.*]

If boundaries weren't meant to be broken, I don't think that they would exist. For me, I can understand the argument that you could end up in a position where you're not really that good at any particular style. However, I feel that the inspiration and the new directions you can achieve by opening yourself up to other styles far outweighs anything you might lose.

WFM: You guys pull from some unique genres, though, like barbershop quartet.

JF: That's right, and it's been good for us. We're just four guys in a rock band who've decided

that barbershop music is cool. Vocally, we all pretty much have the same range. Real barbershop quartets are put together based on the ranges of the different singers, so for us to go out and do barbershop is a real challenge.

Honestly, we're not a *good* barbershop quartet, but I still love doing it. I love singing like that. But more importantly, singing in that style makes everybody in the band a much better vocalist. When the other guys sing harmony on one of our tunes, having the barbershop experience makes them able to blend better. We're all better singers *together* because we spend hours and hours looking at voice vowel charts to shape our vowels correctly.

There is nothing, at this point in the world, that you can't learn from some other established genre of music. If Pearl Jam studied nothing but bluegrass for a year it would help them be Pearl Jam. It would help them even if they never played one note of acoustic music. I guess that's the way we look at it.

WFM: When the band is writing original material, is it an open sort of situation where you can bring in a style that you'd like to investigate?

JF: I'm constantly baffled by how open everybody is in this band. We're all willing to try anything once. If someone says let's try this song with a calypso beat, or let's try that with a swing feel, everyone's immediate response is, "Let's do it." Everyone will really put themselves into it.

WFM: With all of the different styles Phish explores, have you had to go back and do research into the specific drum beats inherent in the styles to get your parts to sound authentic?

JF: I have researched things, but what normally happens with us is that we'll want to try something in a certain style, and then I have to figure out something that sounds right. At that point I might try to investigate it a bit further to find out what the "correct" beats are. Then I disregard them. I don't want to play a standard Latin beat or a swing beat. I want to make it my own.

More often than not the styles we play are influenced by the music we're trying to make. It doesn't start with us wanting to play in a certain style, which may be a

Phish Sticks

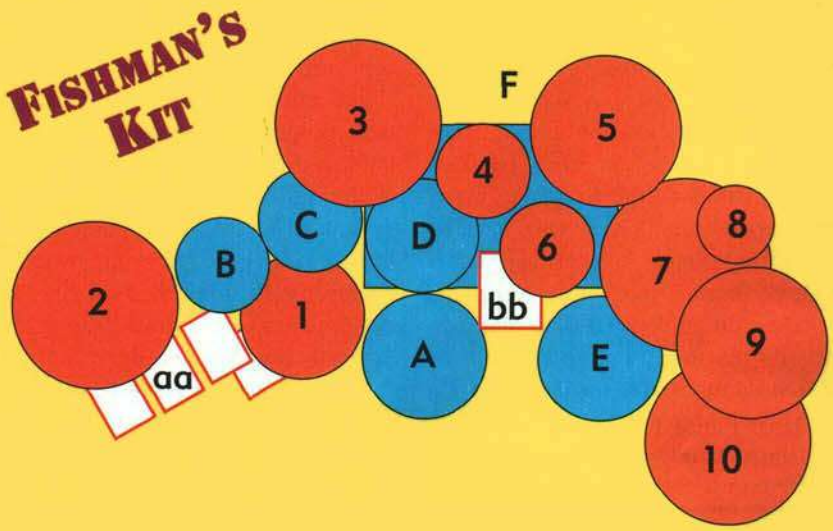
Here are the albums Jon lists as the ones most representative of his drumming...

Artist	Album Title
J. Willis Pratt	The Lost Paradox
Phish	Rift
Phish	Hoist
Phish	Picture Of Nectar
Phish	Junta
Phish	Lawn Boy
Dude Of Life & Phish	Dude Of Life

...and here are the ones he listens to most for inspiration.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
Mills Brothers	Four Boys And A Guitar	none
Brian Eno	Apollo	none
Velvet Underground	Loaded	Moe Tucker
Ivo Papasov's Wedding Band	Orpheus Ascending	Sasha
King Crimson	Larks' Tongues In Aspic	Bill Bruford, Jamie Muir
Sun Ra	Jazz In Silhouette	William Cochrane, Robert Barry
Mahavishnu Orchestra	Visions Of The Emerald Beyond	Narada Michael Walden
Peter Zeldman	Other Not Elsewhere	Peter Zeldman

Fishman's Kit



Drumset: Eames custom shells (with Phish logo) with DW lugholders and Ludwig die-cast hoops
(kit designed by Mike Sangillo of Portland Percussion)

- **A.** 5½ x 14 wood snare
- **B.** 8x8 tom
- **C.** 10 x 10 tom
- **D.** 10 x 12 tom
- **E.** 14x14 floor tom
- **F.** 16 x 22 bass drum (Tama *Artstar It)*

Hardware: Gibraltar rack system, Pearl *800* series pedals, RIMS mounts on toms

Heads: Remo coated *Ambassadors* on snare and toms, clear *Ambassador on* batter side of bass drum, Ebony *Ambassador* on front

Cymbals: Zildjian

1. 14" *New Beat* hi-hats
2. 17" K dark medium-thin crash
3. 18" K pang with rivets
4. 8" Rancan *Icebell*
5. 16" A thin crash
6. 8" splash
7. 20" A Ping ride
8. 6" Rancan *Icebell*
9. 16" *Oriental China Trash*
10. 18" K dark thin crash

aa. four wood blocks mounted to the left and under the hi-hat
bb. small cowbell

Sticks: Vic Firth *5A* model with wood tip

Electronics: 1956 Electrolux cannister vacuum cleaner

backwards way of doing things, especially as a drummer. But I think I've had a back-door approach to drumming ever since I started. I can read music, but I can't read well. I can't sight-read at all, but I can write anything out on paper and then learn it.

When I was thirteen I took three drum lessons, because I thought I should learn how to read, but I never got that good at it. From that point on I could read if I wanted to. I didn't take another lesson until a couple of years ago, when I went to Joe Morello. Unfortunately I only had one lesson with him, mostly because I'm touring all the time and because he lives in New Jersey. I haven't stayed with it and I've often thought that I would like to go back and really get into it.

WFM: Since you really haven't studied with anyone, how did you develop your playing?

JF: Most of the coordination or chops I've gotten together have come from just sitting at my drumset and working out things I've heard other drummers play. When I was a kid I'd get all excited by a song, like "When The Levee Breaks" by Led Zeppelin. That was the first song that I learned how to play. I remember standing in front of my stereo, just blasting "When The Levee Breaks" and "air-guitaring" the parts. Then I'd go downstairs to the basement with the song running through my head, and I'd try to learn the drum part. I'd have to play it from memory. It was a long, passionate process. I did that for ten years. Eventually I started getting into old Genesis, Bill Bruford's playing in King Crimson and Yes, all of Zappa's drummers, and the Mahavishnu Orchestra.

I would try to imitate anything from these people that I liked. However, I never did it with headphones on. I never listened to the music while I was doing it, so I never learned *exactly* what they were playing—it was always from my own warped perspective. I think that's mainly how I developed my own drumming style—by not really copying anybody.

Now when I practice I'll just sit down and jam with myself. I'll just be jamming along, and when I stumble across something that sounds interesting but that I can't quite play, I'll stop and try to figure it out. It might take a couple of days, but I'll get it. I enjoy practicing and opening myself up to new things, including drum books. I went out and got a copy of *Stick Control* a couple of years ago—better late than never! [laughs] I play the exercises on a pillow, plus I do rudiments like paradiddles, double-stroke rolls, and single-stroke rolls, all on a pillow. I guess I should have been doing this all along.

WFM: When you were talking before about being self-taught, it's one thing to cop a simple rock beat, but it's a different matter when you're trying to play, let's

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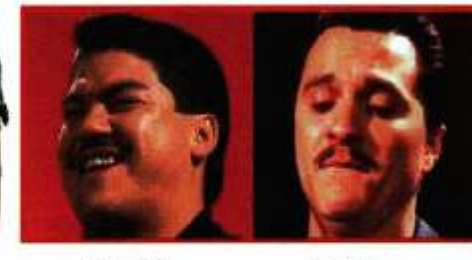

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say, a syncopated Latin groove. Was it the same process for you when playing more involved styles?

JF: The process is pretty much the same. The reason I've worked on different styles is that I just hate to play a "normal" beat. Someone can bring in a simple rock tune, and I could play a straight rock beat to it, but I think that no matter how straight a thing might be, you can still find some different way to play it and still be true to the basic groove of the song.

For a long time I followed this rule: I have to have a different beat for every song. That gets pretty hairy as time goes on because you start to find that your styles, or your approaches to things, overlap. Even though other things may not be exactly the same, there are similarities. That's okay, but I think that I'm always looking for something new.

Getting to your question about Latin music, playing in a Latin flavor was the only time when I actually said, "I've got to really research this." I found that there are certain key concepts in Latin drumming that I've tried to latch on to. One of these occurred to me when I was examining Latin music written out. It reminded me of runners in a relay race, where one runner will hand a baton off to the next. I kind of imagine Latin rhythms that way—pairs of 8th notes are lined up so that the second 8th note of one pair will be the first 8th note of another. Once I discovered that, I went about teaching myself how to do all sorts of beats that involved hitting different drums and "overlapping" 8th notes. It isn't necessarily *true* Latin, just my warped perspective of what Latin drumming is. But at this point I don't think I've had an original thought when it comes to Latin music.

WFM: Although maybe the way you've applied it has been original.

JF: Maybe, but if so then it's been out of sheer ignorance. I don't enjoy being ignorant. When we went on tour with Santana, Carlos showed me stuff every day. He was really cool and very helpful. I loved that.

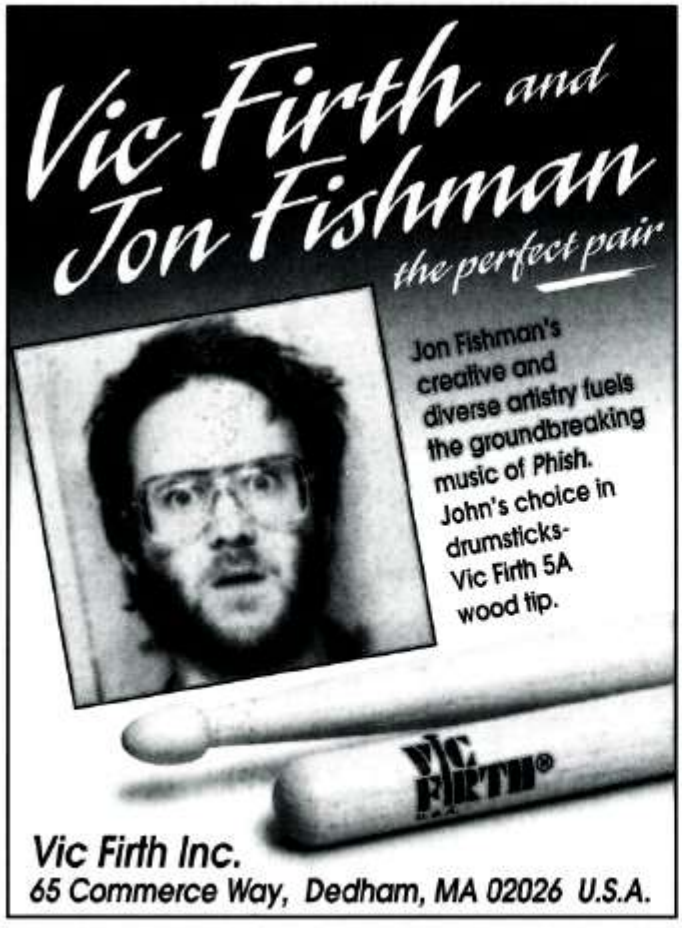
It's very difficult for me to seek out instruction, because I always have my own agenda. I'm always working on things that I want to develop. When it comes down to taking a lesson and sort of following someone else's program, even though it might be a really great program, I get yanked by my own agenda.

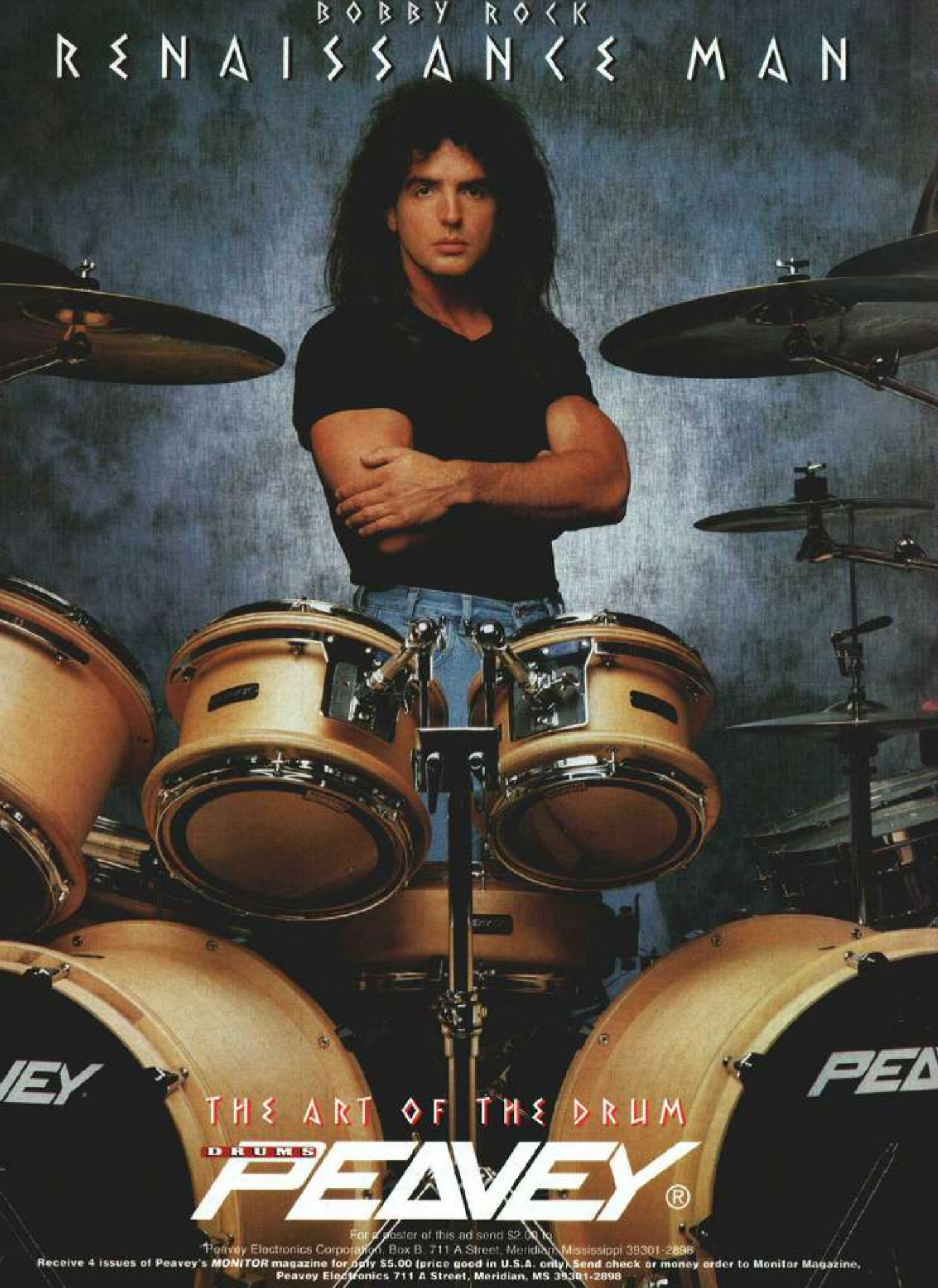
WFM: Many of the styles that the band explores seem rhythm-based. Do you have a big influence on bringing those ideas into the band?

JF: Honestly, it comes from all of us. For instance, I would still be ignorant to bluegrass music if it weren't for Mike. He has always been a pretty big fan of traditional country & western and bluegrass music, and he's helped us investigate those styles.

Ten years ago I couldn't listen to country music. Now I like traditional country, although I'm not into pop-country. To me, pop-country is just about as bad as pop-metal. I don't want to start putting down genres, though. Every genre of music has it's great players, and if you do a little investigating you can find out who they are and really learn something from them.

Trey writes a lot of things that are rhythmic-based. He and I lived together for about four years, and during that time there were a lot of hours that I would be practicing. My drums were in a room right off the kitchen, so whenever Trey would be in the kitchen he'd hear some of the patterns I would be playing. He'd then go off and

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write a song around those beats.

One time Mike called me up and told me he had an idea for a drum part to a song he had written. He sang what he thought the drum part should be, and I wrote it all down. Mike is probably the worst drummer out of all of us in the band, but the beat he came up with was unusual. As a drummer I would never have thought of it. I would have gone for something much more conventional.

One other time Trey had a piece of music that he had written, and he based the drum part on my setup. He actually sat down at my drumset and wrote out the drum part based on where things were positioned on the kit. That was a pretty creative way of coming up with a drum part.

WFM: What song was that from?

JF: That was from a piece called "Eliza," which is on *A Picture Of Nectar.* It's a very soft piece. It's actually the second tune on the album and it comes right after this raging thing called "Llama." "Eliza" is this really nice, beautiful melody, and I'm playing the drums with mallets. It's not very well defined; it just sort of goes along and changes with the melody.

A lot of the drum parts I come up with are based on things that I'm working on at the given moment. Something I've been experimenting with for a while is playing ride patterns with my left hand. Since my right hand is so much more coordinated than my left, I figure that if I can ride with my left hand I've got a whole universe of stuff I can do with the right. That led me to the beat for "Esther," which is a song on our first album.

WFM: Another element to your playing that comes across loud and clear is your lack of fear. You seem to play on the edge and just go for it. You can hear it even on Phish's most recent studio album, *Hoist,* which is by far the most produced effort the band has recorded.

JF: I'm glad that's what you hear. It's important to me.

Last night I was watching a documentary on the Who, and Roger Daltry said that they had never been that concerned about the correct note. He said they would take a bum note and a bead of sweat over a right note any day. I think that's great—that's the bottom line. You study and try to learn your part as well as you can, and then play the music with the right spirit. Carlos Santana would always say, "If you're thinking about it, you're not making music." As for what I play and how it's been captured on record, sometimes my hands work really well and things come right out, other times I'm just a crude vehicle for this really cool idea, [laughs] But what's important is that the feeling gets across—that you're having fun and that you're playing *music.*

I like to get to a point with any song where I don't have to think about it. What I really like to do is take a song and learn the part completely, really intellectualize it until I know exactly what to play. I want to get it to a point where I could be run over by a truck, get up, walk over to a set of drums, and play the part.

The "go for it" attitude comes into play for me regarding the fills. Fills are the points in a song where I'm free to express what's flashing through my brain at that given moment. I like them to be as "unpracticed" as possible. Fills are a true statement of where you are at that moment in your life. Sometimes they come out

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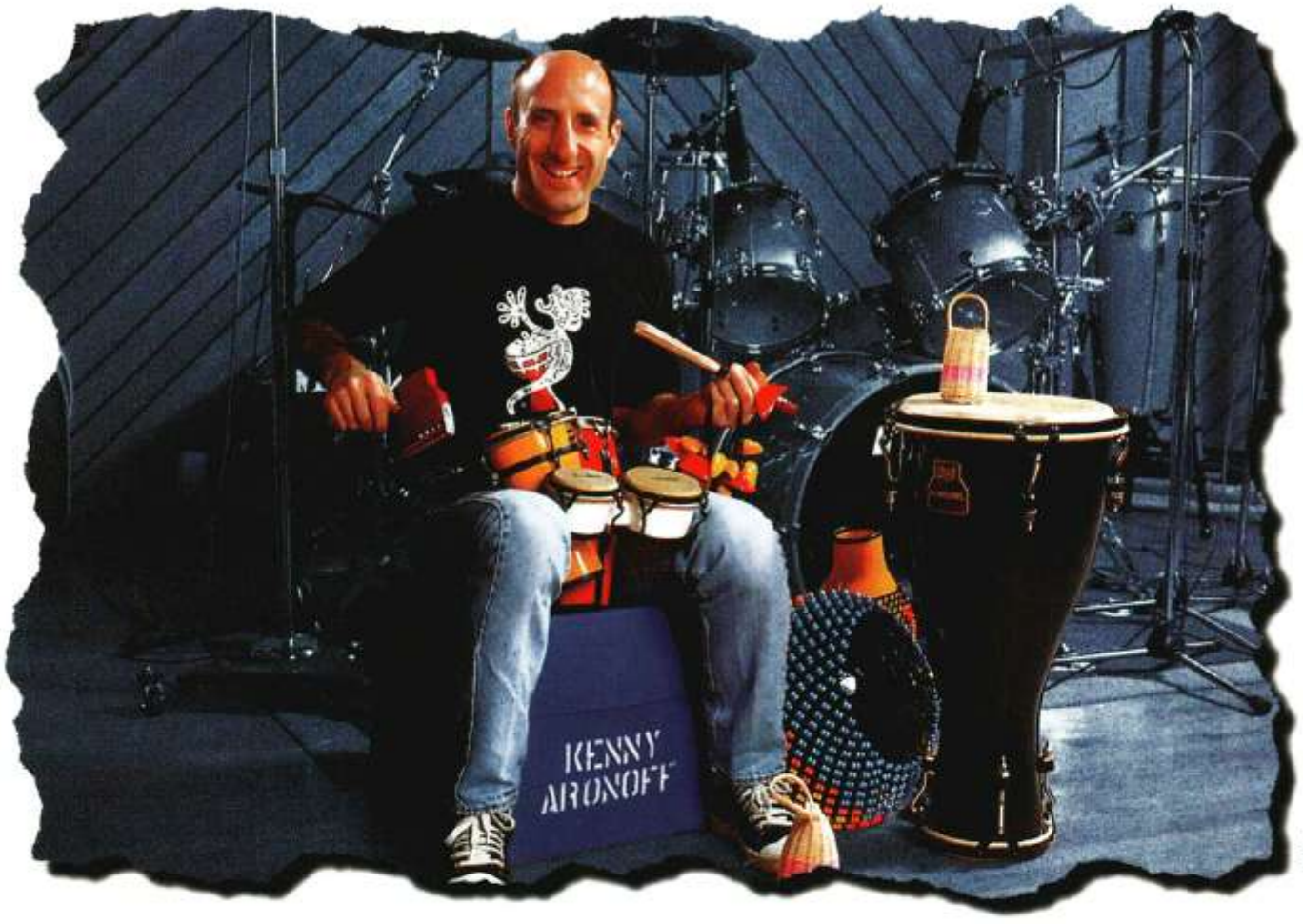

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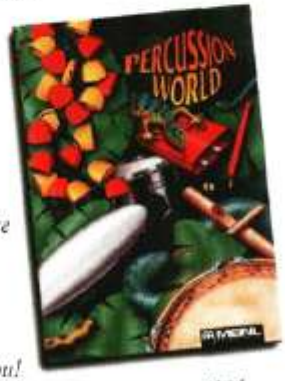

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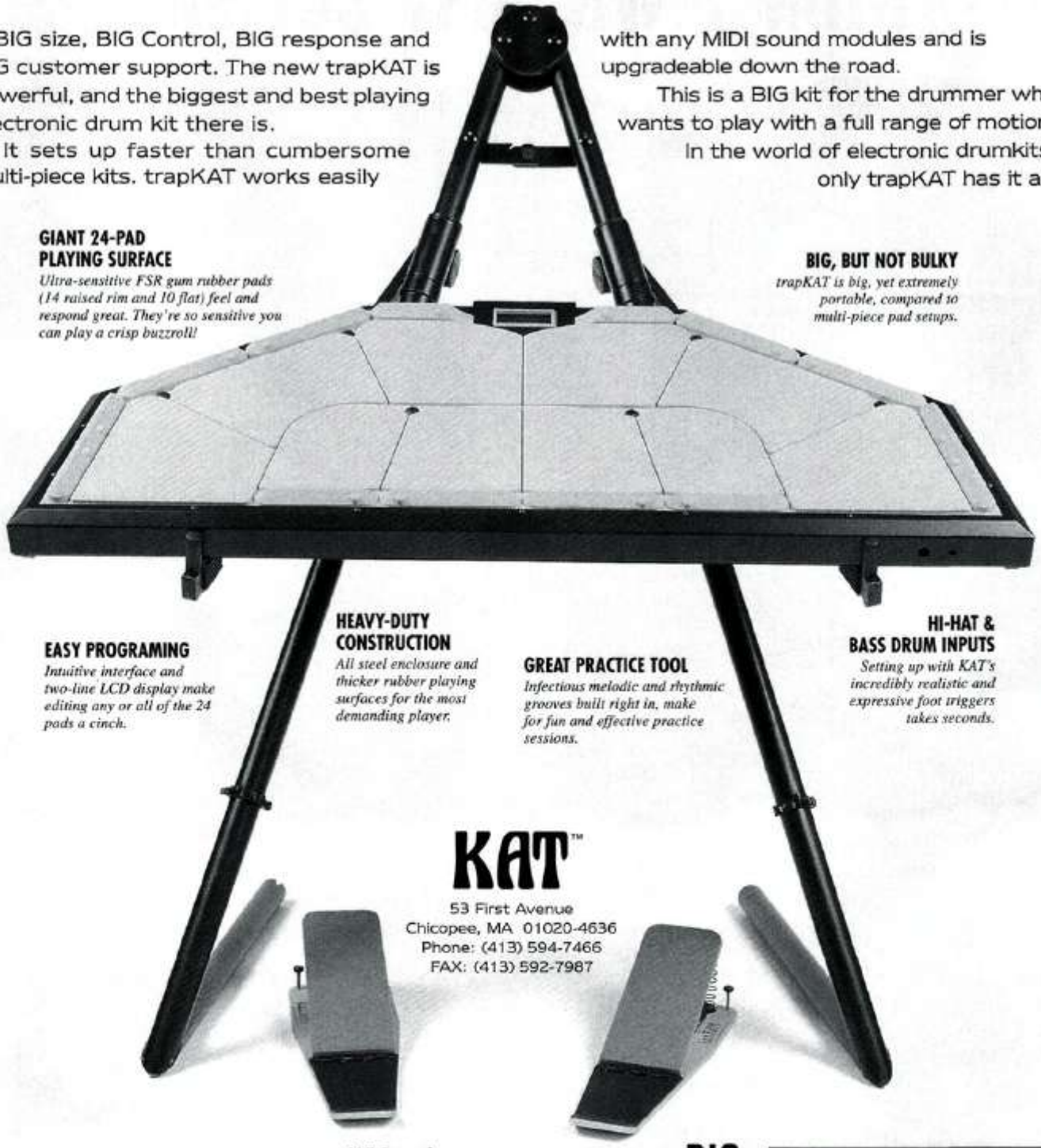

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great and sometimes you fall on your face.

WFM: There are drummers who are extremely careful and accurate when it comes to fills.

JF: I guess they have a different mindset. There is no better place to fall on your face than in the middle of a drum fill. [laughs] The thing to remember is that screwing up a fill doesn't do any harm. A fill is a fill—no big deal. It's real emotion.

I think the important idea here is that you have to be accepting of where you're at as a player. You should be able to take the stage, or get in a recording studio, and think, "Well, here I am. I've done my homework. This is as good as I am at this given moment." It kind of takes some of the pressure off and gives you the freedom to play what's in your heart.

WFM: I assume that this "go for it" attitude is all over the new live record Phish is about to release.

JF: We went out on stage and wailed this stuff. Obviously there's no audience when you make a studio album. You go into a little box to record, and you hope to come up with the energy that you feel when you play live. We just never felt that our albums captured that energy. So after eleven years of being a band we came up with the incredibly bright idea of, "Hey, let's do a live album—maybe that will capture the energy of a show."

We've gotten good performances on albums, and I think that *Hoist* was a really good album in terms of the mix. It sounds really good and it's definitely the most relaxed I've ever been about making an album. We all reached a good point with *Hoist.* But the only way to get to a better level, I think, in terms of that *attitude,* is to record the live show.

WFM: Did knowing that you were performing tracks live that were going to be used for the album affect how you were playing?

JF: We figured out a way around that by recording almost the whole dang tour! We just went out and played our normal show. We recorded forty-four gigs, and from that we had to come up with 140 minutes of music. If you can't come up with two hours of music out of that many gigs, you should hang it up! [laughs]

WFM: How were you able to determine which tracks to use?

JF: When we'd come off stage each of us would write down what we thought on a list. We didn't show each other our lists until the end of the tour, and the nights that more than one of us chose, we put on a master list. That narrowed it down to about a quarter of the tour.

Next, we solicited the "Phish Net" [the band's Internet web site where they communicate with their "on-line" fans]. We made an announcement that we were putting together a live album and asked them for their input. A lot of our fans follow us from show to show, so they have a good perspective on which shows were good. Their input really helped because they were looking at things from a different point of view than we were. So between our notebooks and our fans we were able to come up with the final list.

WFM: Since you were recording shows from different venues, are the basic sounds varied from tune to tune?

JF: Well, yes and no. [laughs] Everything was close-miked and it went right to the decks, but there were different room sounds. There were room mic's at the soundboard and in the back of the room for

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Modern Drummer has established a department called *On The Move* for the purpose of giving coverage to individuals whose activities and talent are worthy of recognition, but who are not yet figures on the national music scene.

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every concert, so in the end we were able to mix as much of the room sound with the stage sound as we wanted. But some nights the signal of the kick drum going to tape sounded like I was hitting a piece of paper, and on other nights it sounded like a massive explosion. Some nights we were playing in a huge auditorium and other nights we were playing in a school cafeteria. We ended up with a lot of different sounds going to tape, but I think that enhances the album.

I kind of relate it to when we recorded *Hoist.* On it we used a different snare drum for every tune, which was a new experience for me. Apparently a lot of producers and engineers today do that to get subtle differences between the tracks. It's a more internalized way of keeping the listener's attention span. With the different locations for the live record we automatically got different sounds on tape. It might not be the ideal sound you would have thought up ahead of time, but it does change the texture from song to song, and I kind of like that.

WFM: What kind of input did you have mixing the live album?

JF: I didn't spend every minute helping to mix the tracks. I felt very comfortable about giving an opinion, but I acted as sort of an objective ear, coming in and hearing what they had come up with after they fine-tuned everything. Then I had a fresh perspective and could listen to the overall sound. What was nice about the setup for me was that, while the other guys were in the control room mixing tracks, I'd be practicing my drums in another room. I kept my chops up and worked on things.

WFM: Are there any particular problems with mixing concert tracks?

JF: We had one song that had a particularly enthusiastic crowd yelling in the background, and we really wanted to include that in the overall feeling of the song. But when I listened to the mix the guys had come up with, it seemed like there was too much crowd noise and not enough of the actual music. The detail was lost. The tradeoff was that if you let the audience be there at the beginning and then took it away when the song got going, it sounded odd. So those are the types of things we had to overcome.

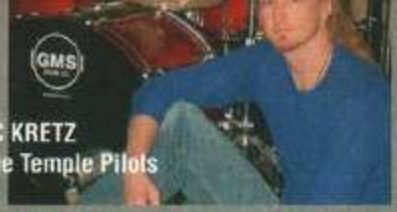
WFM: Listening to the live tracks, have you noticed any changes in the way you play over time? Has it given you a different perspective?

JF: Oh, my God, yes—too bloody much perspective! I've definitely noticed some things about my own playing, but the main area of growth has been in my ability to groove. It's something that the whole band has noticed.

I think one of the reasons my playing has changed, besides the constant gigging with Phish and the practicing I've done, is some of the work I've done outside of the band. When the band wasn't touring I went out and did gigs with some local funk bands. I also worked with a local country band where all I would do was play straight time. It's groove music and it was hard for me. I had to work at it to get it to sound right. That definitely affected the way I perceive things.

WFM: And have you noticed any musical changes within the *band* because of it?

JF: Well, the stuff that has been most glaring is the band's ability to stay locked in together when we're improvising. While listening to the live tracks there have been moments where I have been truly blown



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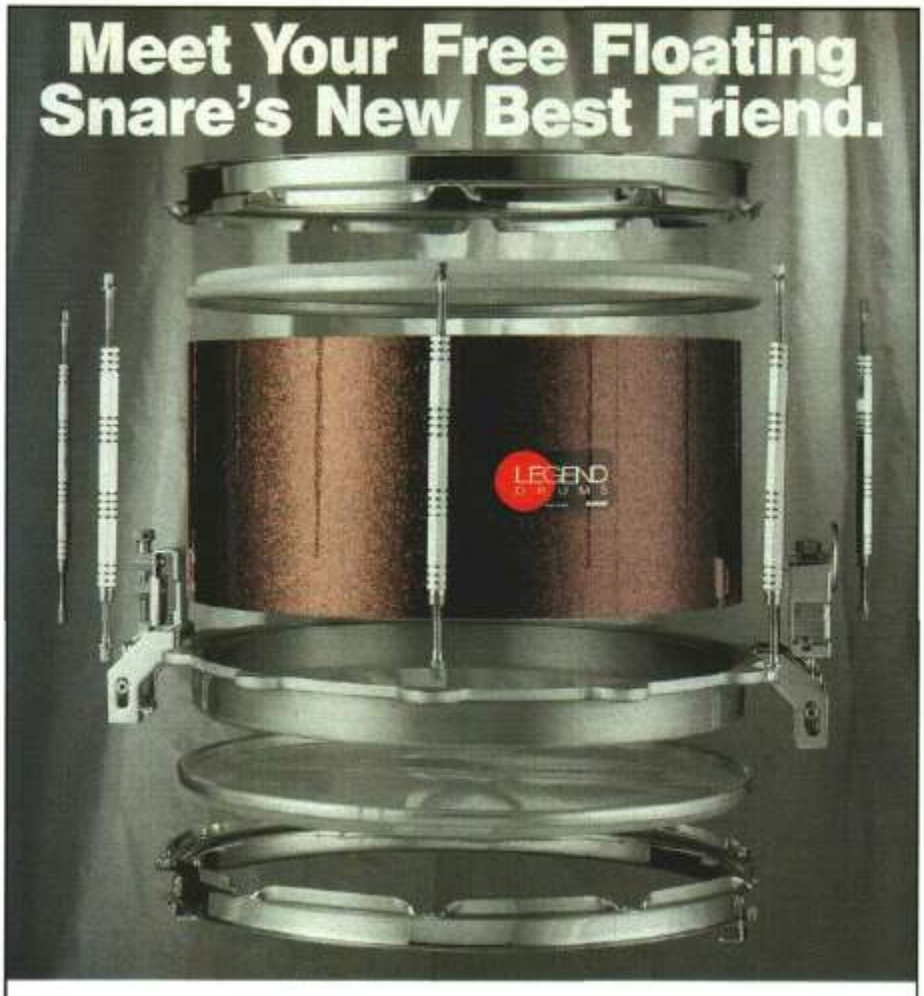

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away. We've gotten to a point where we are very tight and seem to know what the others are thinking. We do a lot of jamming, and there are these moments where, on the same beat, all of us just fall right into something, with no signal or command or anything. It's just amazing.

WFM: Playing so many gigs over the past few years has paid off.

JF: That's part of it. But we actually have band exercises that we've developed that help us improvise together. We don't even practice songs anymore, we just practice jamming.

WFM: What are these exercises?

JF: They are designed to open up our ears to each other. Early on I found that all I did was follow Trey, musically. Once we realized this we talked about how drummers and bass players are supposed to hook up, so we started focusing on that. Then Page, our keyboard player, who's the newest member of the band, is on the other side of the stage from me. I sit on stage right and he's on stage left. Page was the last guy in the band that I got around to paying specific attention to.

One day we found ourselves saying, "Well, geez. Maybe we should try to open ourselves up to the whole band. Are there ways that we can hear *everybody* at once and not just be going with one person all the time?" So we came up with these exercises. One is called "Including Your Own Hey."

WFM: How does that work?

JF: When we perform we set up in a specific order across the stage—Page, Trey, Mike, and then me. For this exercise, Page will play a simple, repetitive riff. It doesn't matter what it is. Then Trey follows Page and does something similar to what he played. Then Mike does something based on what those two did. Finally, I come in. Once it's going and repeating, it's up to the next guy in line to initiate a change. Working across the stage, Trey would be next to initiate the change. What happens is, when we hear that each guy has found something and is locked into it, we yell out "hey." When everyone has yelled "hey," the next person in line initiates the change. Everyone listens to see that everyone has responded and has locked in. We just go around in a circle doing that. So by doing this we're having to listen to each other and be creative.

That exercise has branched off into different exercises. One is the "Mimicking Hey," where two people mimic and the other two people have to specifically *not* mimic. For example, Page will play something and then Trey will try to mimic him, and Mike and I will do something totally different. Once Page is successfully mimicked by Trey he'll yell "hey," and then Mike mimics him. At that point Trey listens to what I'm doing and does something off of what I'm playing, but not the same. Once Mike mimics Page, then it's my turn to mimic him.

Then there's another exercise we have called "Filling The Hey Hole," which is where we each have to play the parts of the beat not occupied by the others. You can't play at the same time anyone else is playing. So we just go around in circles doing this, and we've gotten better and better at it.

WFM: And you've been able to hear places in the music where these exercises have paid off?

JF: I can't even begin to tell you how much. After about a year of doing the

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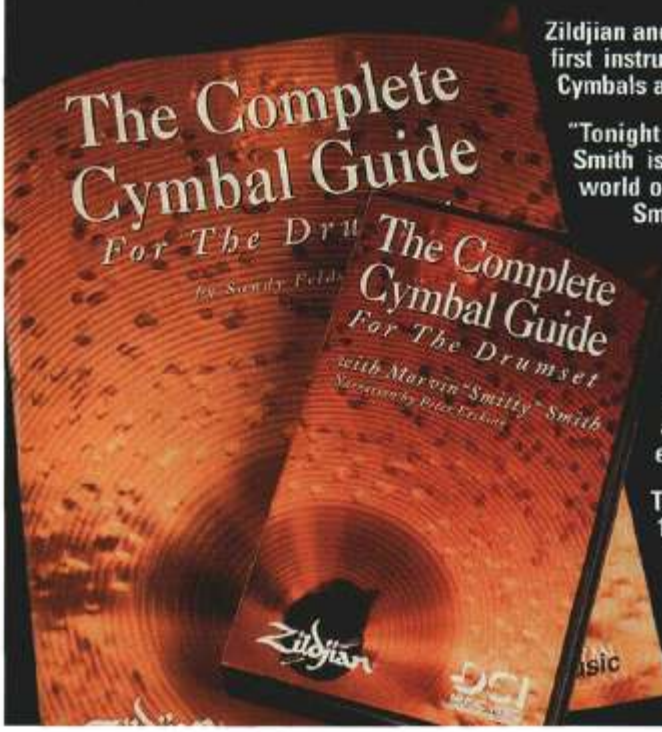

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"Hey" exercises, our ability to jam as a unit on stage dramatically improved. We could improvise for longer periods of time without getting boring—it's ridiculous. It's just lifted our playing as a group on several levels.

WFM: Another part of the Phish story is your stage antics, which seem to be a big part of the band's notoriety.

JF: Well, all of it has come to us purely by accident. There was never a time when we thought, "Oh, we have to have something to do on stage." Here's an example of how we came up with one of our ideas: We were driving by this huge yard sale and there were these trampolines for sale. We looked at each other and said, "Let's use those tonight at the gig!"

Another time we saw one of those 4 A.M. commercials for a ski-in-place exercise machine, and we thought that would be great during a song called "It's Ice." There's this kind of eerie section in the tune where the lyrics talk about this guy who is trapped under the ice. It's a solo piano section, so we thought that since Trey and Mike aren't doing anything in that section they might as well be on those ski machines. That's how these things normally develop.

WFM: And what about the dress you always perform in?

JF: It's not a dress, it's a frock. I've worn it every night on stage for the last seven years. It just stayed with me. Everyone has to have a uniform, and the frock is mine.

The frock helps me to get into the performance and have more fun. When I go on stage in a frock I'm able to take the music seriously, but I can't take *myself* seriously. I don't think of myself as an egotistical person, and if you're wearing a dress and goggles onstage in front of ten thousand people, you couldn't be even if you wanted to. Also, I'm kind of an exhibitionist. I'm the only one in the band who has gotten naked on stage. It's not like an obsession or anything.

WFM: Okay.... By the way, for someone who hasn't seen you perform, what's the deal with your vacuum cleaner solo?

JF: It all started at a party I was at years ago. I got really drunk. Sophie, Page's fiancee, was joking with me, and asked, "Hey Fish, can you play anything other than the drums?" I told her I could play anything. Since it was a "moving" party there was a vacuum out, so she told me to play the vacuum. I turned it on, put my lips up to the nozzle, and proceeded to cut the hell out of my mouth. But before it got bad I had some interesting sounds happening on it. After that I did it onstage as a joke, and it's just grown to a point where I can get some interesting sounds, and now people expect it. I figure that when I'm really old I'm going to have one really long jowl. [laughs]

The audiences seem to love it. When I get on stage, anything goes. I think people can relate to that, because when you go to a rock concert you are definitely going to unwind. You want to forget about your problems. I think it gives people something they need.

WFM: And how about you?

JF: I know I need it—not the antics, but the drumming. If I wasn't a drummer in this band I don't know what I'd be. I realize that drumming is why I'm here. It answers a lot of questions for me. I don't know, I think that if I hadn't found drumming I might have become a bad person. [laughs] I might have become a vigilante, or a sniper, or a Jeffrey Dahmer.

WFM: I'm glad you found the drums.

JF: I am too.

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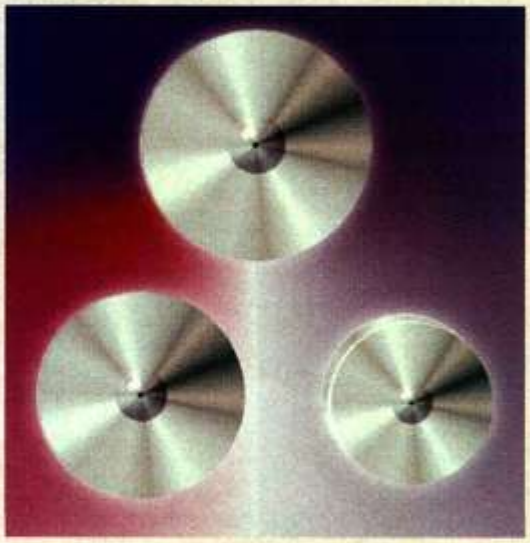

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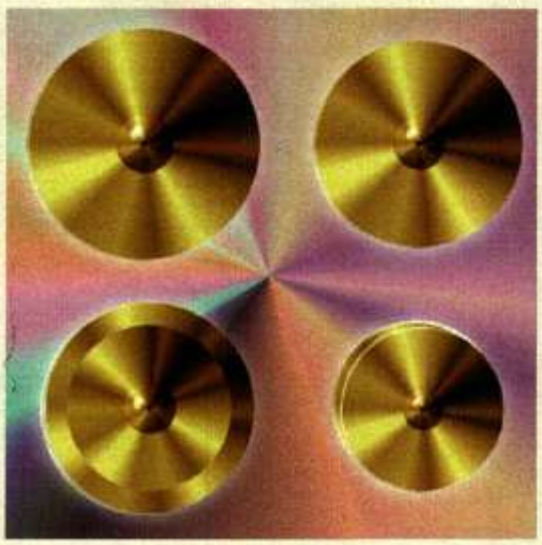

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1) Submit standard-sized postcards only. Be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number.
2) Your entry must be postmarked by September 1, 1995.
3) You may enter as many times as you wish, but each entry must be mailed individually.
4) Winner will be notified by telephone. Prizes include shipping costs.
5) Previous Modern Drummer contest winners are ineligible.
6) Employees of Modern Drummer and the Camber Cymbal Co. (a division of Ace Products) are ineligible.

Alvino Bennett

Alvino Bennett nearly blew it. It was 1974, and the twenty-year-old drummer was about to embark upon his first big gig with Minnie Riperton. Bennett was in his hometown of Chicago readying for his departure to L.A., and he dropped by ace guitarist Cash McCall's house to complete some business. McCall, who was responsible for Bennett's getting the gig, was also journeying to L.A. with him to work with Riperton.

"I went back home to get my ride to the airport," Bennett recalls, "and the people who were supposed to take me were arguing about *who* was going to take me! Meanwhile, time was passing and I was still packing. We missed the flight, and Cash and the percussionist were standing at the airport waiting for me. Needless to say, Cash read me the riot act. I literally cried."

The situation turned out fine, for they took the next flight out and went straight to the rehearsal. But Bennett learned a lifetime lesson: *Always* be on time. He's been on time ever since, and his career over the past twenty years has grown to be quite impressive, featuring gigs and/or sessions for notables such as LTD (of which he was a member), Cheryl Lynn, Chaka Khan, Sheena Easton, Soul II Soul, Kenny Loggins, Stephen Bishop, Joshua Kadison, Patrice Rushen, and Stevie Wonder. Currently he's working with Bryan Ferry, with plans to do a blues record with Ferry's musical director, Robin Trower, once the tour is completed. When he's not out of town, Alvino can be found playing at one of the Los Angeles blues clubs. This is one drummer who always has something going on.

That's quite an accomplishment for a drummer whose

The Quintessential Sideman

By Robyn Flans

Photos By Alex Solca

Aunt Ella got him started, and who considers the streets his training ground. Bennett had a few lessons from a jazz drummer named Marshall Thomson, but he picked the rest up from friends and records. By sixteen, he was playing with the likes of Willie Dixon and KoKo Taylor and had caught the eye of guitarist Cash McCall, who began to champion his cause. After the above-mentioned Riperton tour, Bennett returned to Chicago, but McCall requested he move to L.A. in 1975 to be a part of his solo project. According to Alvino, it was his first exposure to serious studio work.

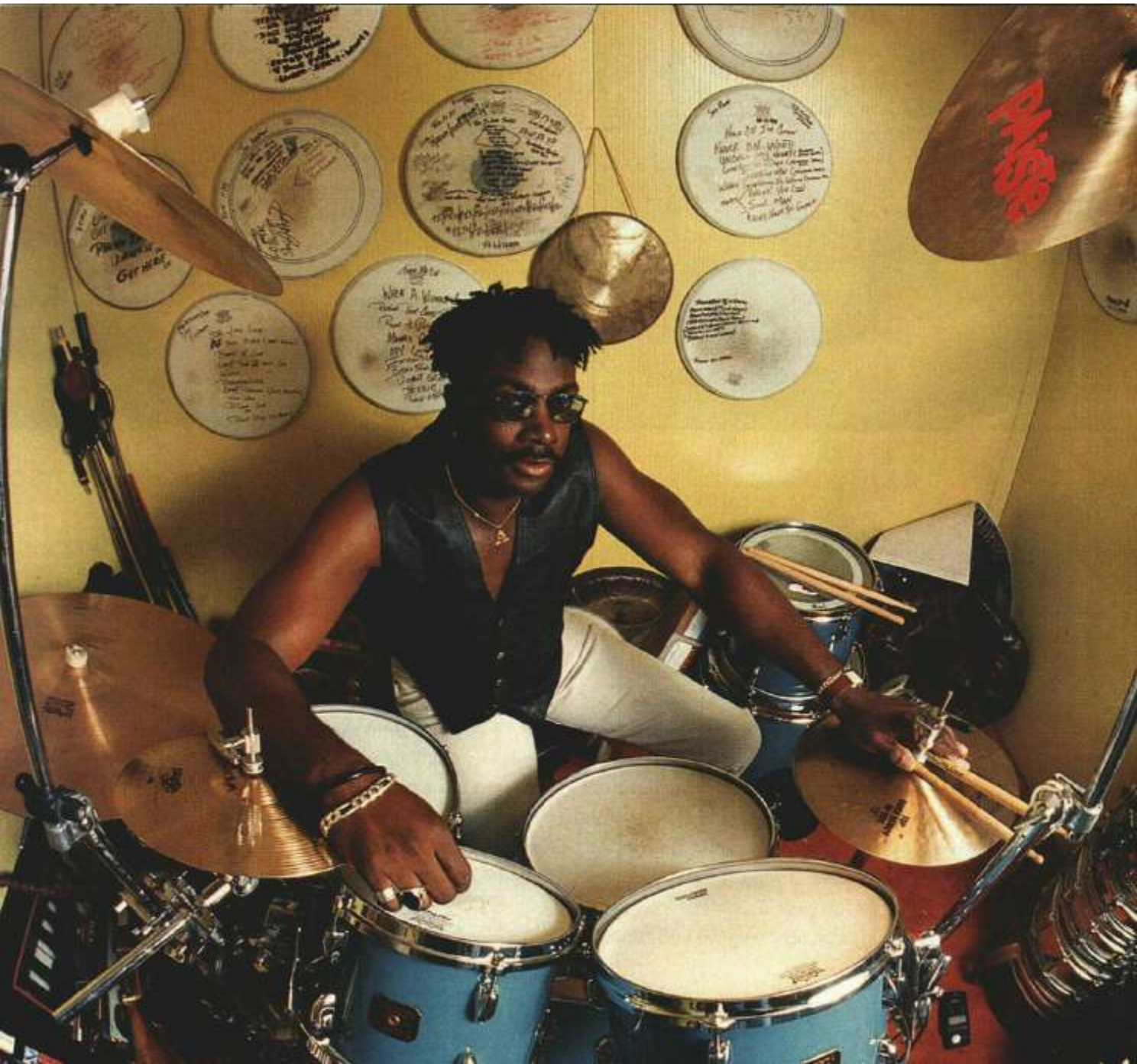
AB: We rehearsed for a year on this album, and CBS footed the bill. McCall had us set up in various apartments, and no matter where we set up it just felt great. I didn't have a car or anything, but I couldn't have cared less, because I was doing something I really loved, and I was with guys I loved being and playing with. It worked out fine.

We did some of the record here in L.A. and ended up going back to Chicago to finish it, where I got the chance to work with the late, great Charles Stepney. Charles produced all of the early Earth, Wind & Fire stuff, and through him I ended up doing some commercials, too.

At that point my reading abilities were null and void, but it was just about having big ears. I could follow chord charts, because it was a form. I can read now because I have a method that I picked it up as I came along. Reading wasn't a big thing where I came from, though.

RF: What was the next big gig?
AB: In '78 I became a member of LTD. That happened because of another friend, the drummer who was there before me, the late great Melvin Webb. It was a good learning experience recording our own records. I got to learn how to make records the proper way.
RF: What did you learn?
AB: I learned that there's a difference between playing live and recording. You still have to have intensity in the studio, but back in the '60s we used to use the phrase "show tempo" for the live show, which was a little bit faster than it was on the record, for more excitement on stage.
RF: Was being in the studio for the first time scary or overwhelming?
AB: I had done some recording in Chicago, but with LTD it was overwhelming because it was my first major session. Here I was with this band who was making very successful gold and platinum records. I was going, "Oh boy, I've got to have myself together." I went out and got the proper cymbals and drums for recording. That's how the first endorsements came about for me. I'm still using the same cymbals—I've been using Paiste ever since I was a kid.

Before I joined the band, there were three drummers on the records—Melvin, Jeffrey Osborne, and Billy Osborne. When I got in the band, I did the whole record. That was kind of overwhelming too, because I had thought I would be sharing the drum chair. It was very cool coming up with ideas and working on patterns with the writers of the songs. It worked out, mistakes and all.
RF: So you recall making mistakes in the studio?
AB: Oh yeah. There was stuff on there that shouldn't have been. I don't remember the songs, but I still live with those. It might have been a fill that shouldn't have been there, or one that started a couple of beats too early. But it felt good to the producer, so he said, "Hey, we'll leave it there."



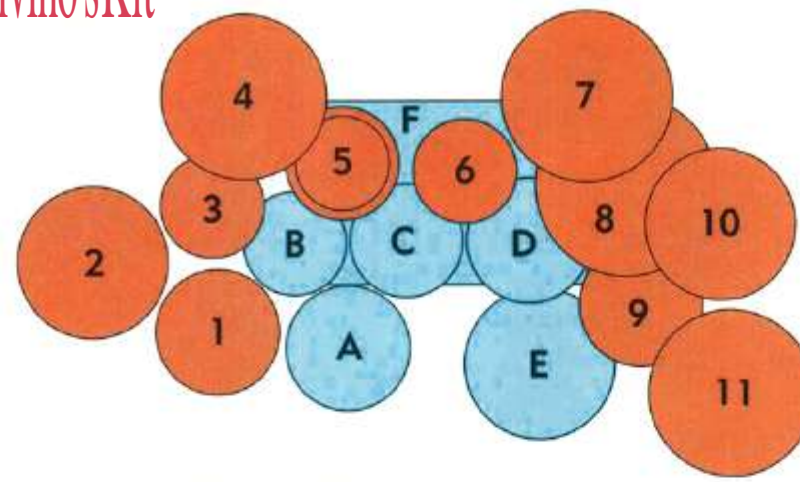
RF: Why did you leave the band after five years?

AB: Every time I would get off the plane, I would run to hug my daughter and she would scream—she wouldn't know who I was. I realized it was just time to leave the band. It was coming to an end anyway, because we had left A&M Records. So I took a couple of years off and began working on a solo project, which didn't get off the ground. But it still gave me the chance to be at home.

RF: Had there been tough times prior to that?

AB: It wasn't like I had a bunch of money in the bank. I did the club thing.

Alvino's Kit



Drumset: Gretsch in "Ice Blue" finish (bass drum has pink hoops)
A. 5 x 14 1953 Slingerland *Radio King* snare
B. 8x 10 tom
C. 10 x 12 tom
D. 12 x 14 tom
E. 14 x 16 floor tom
F. 18 x 24 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste
1. 14" *Paiste* hi-hats *(Power Hat* on top, *Dark Crisp* on bottom)
2. 16" *Paiste* mellow crash
3. 10" *Sound Formula Reflector* splash
4. 18" *Paiste* Full crash
5. 8" *Paiste* splash upside down and on top of a 12" *Paiste* splash
6. 10" *Paiste* splash
7. 20" *Paiste* Full crash
8. 21" *Paiste* Dry ride
9. 13" *Paiste* hi-hats (same combination as above)
10. 16" *Paiste* Full crash
11. 18" *Sound Reflector* mellow China

Hardware: Pearl *DR-1* rack system (old style) and stands, RIMS mounts, Tama *Lever Glide* hi-hat, DW 5000 *Turbo* bass drum pedal
Heads: Remo coated *Emperor* on snare batter, clear *Emperors* on tops of toms with Ebony *Ambassadors* underneath, Ebony *Ambassador* on front and back on bass drum (with down pillow inside for muffling)
Sticks: Carolina *Fatback* model, Pro-Mark *Hot Rods,* Vic Firth brushes, Pro-Mark *MT3* mallets, Musser *M-l9* mallets
Electronics: Roland *Octapad,* Boss *DE-66* metronome, Sony *V6* headphones (instead of monitors)
Microphones: Shure *SM 57* on top of snare with an *AKG 414* on snare side, Shure *SM 98* on toms, AKG *414* on cymbals, AKG *C-460* on hi-hats, Beyer *M88* on bass drum

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That's how I got to do the studio stuff in L.A.—I met some people in a club who were big songwriters at the time. I survived off of that, and then my lovely wife Kerry had a job and brought home the bacon. I finally got hooked up with Cheryl Lynn and did a long, grueling tour with her.

RF: That was the height of her disco success. How did you feel about disco coming from the old blues thing?

AB: It was cool. I certainly played a lot of it. I did a lot of the pre-demos for disco, being one of the staff drummers at Jobete and working with such great writers as Marilyn McLeod and Pam Sawyer. It was fine.

RF: Chaka Khan was next.

AB: The following year, a friend of mine called me and said, "We're looking for a drummer for Chaka again." Vinnie Colaiuta had been playing with her and then left to do a Fox TV show. I said, "Oh, you must need some telephone numbers." I was thinking, "I'm not worthy."

RF: Why was that your automatic response?

AB: Seeing players like Vinnie and Armand Grimaldi doing the gig was intimidating, and I was from a whole other playing field. Chaka's music was so diverse. She did R&B, pop, and tinges of jazz. But the friend who called said, "No, no, would *you* be interested?" I said, "Yeah, I'll give it a shot." So I listened to her last record, which one of my favorite drummers, Steve Ferrone, played on. I thought at that point that I might be able to do it. I went the next day and we played, and man, it felt great! An old buddy of mine, James Jamerson, Jr., was playing bass, so I felt comfortable as soon as I walked in. If you go in and you're comfortable, hopefully you'll do your best. I did things they weren't expecting me to do, but it was right.

RF: Like what things?

AB: Using all the dynamics and breaking a song down where it was supposed to be breaking down. We did three or four songs. I thanked them and left. At 2:00 the next morning my phone rang. When your phone rings at 2:00 in the morning you think something's wrong. But it was the musical director, Tony Patler, saying, "Alvino, I have bad news for you. You got the gig." I rehearsed with the band for seven days and Chaka still hadn't been there. She was living in New York and had put all her trust

in the bandleader on the West Coast. I didn't meet her until the first gig.

RF: That must have been a little nerve-racking. When you finally did work with her, what did she need from a drummer?

AB: Consistency. She needed someone who would be very sensitive to the music, someone who would pay attention to what was going on and have a definite pocket. If you listen to the earlier stuff, whether she was doing stuff from Rufus or on her own, it was all just wonderful music and real locked in.

RF: Were there lessons learned on that gig for you?

AB: Just playing with another artist gives you experience, and what you learn about pleasing one artist carries over to another. If, say, she wasn't herself on a particular day, I would have to kick a little harder to get her in the mood. And she wanted us to play. She was the kind of artist who would kick you in the butt with her vocals. She hardly had anything to say to her musicians, because she trusted them. She would come into rehearsal and sing her songs.

RF: You ended up becoming her musical director.

AB: Yes, in '88. The music was already done, so I didn't need to change any of that, but I put together a couple of the bands for her. It worked out great. Usually the keyboard player ends up being the MD, but we drummers have to prove that we can be leaders. One of my favorites, Buddy Miles, was a wonderful leader, MD, writer, and producer. Narada Michael Walden definitely proves that a drummer can do more than just drum.

RF: The next big gig for you was Sheena Easton, which was something completely different for you. What was the challenge there?

AB: Once again, just playing with different musicians. There's always an adjustment. Even if you've heard certain guys on record, you won't know how you're going to gel with them. It's really hard at an audition in particular, because you play the way you play and then you've got a percussionist, bass player, guitarist, keyboardist, and whatever else, and they're there auditioning with you.

RF: Is there a way you can get comfortable with that? Do you have a method, because

On The Groovin' Side

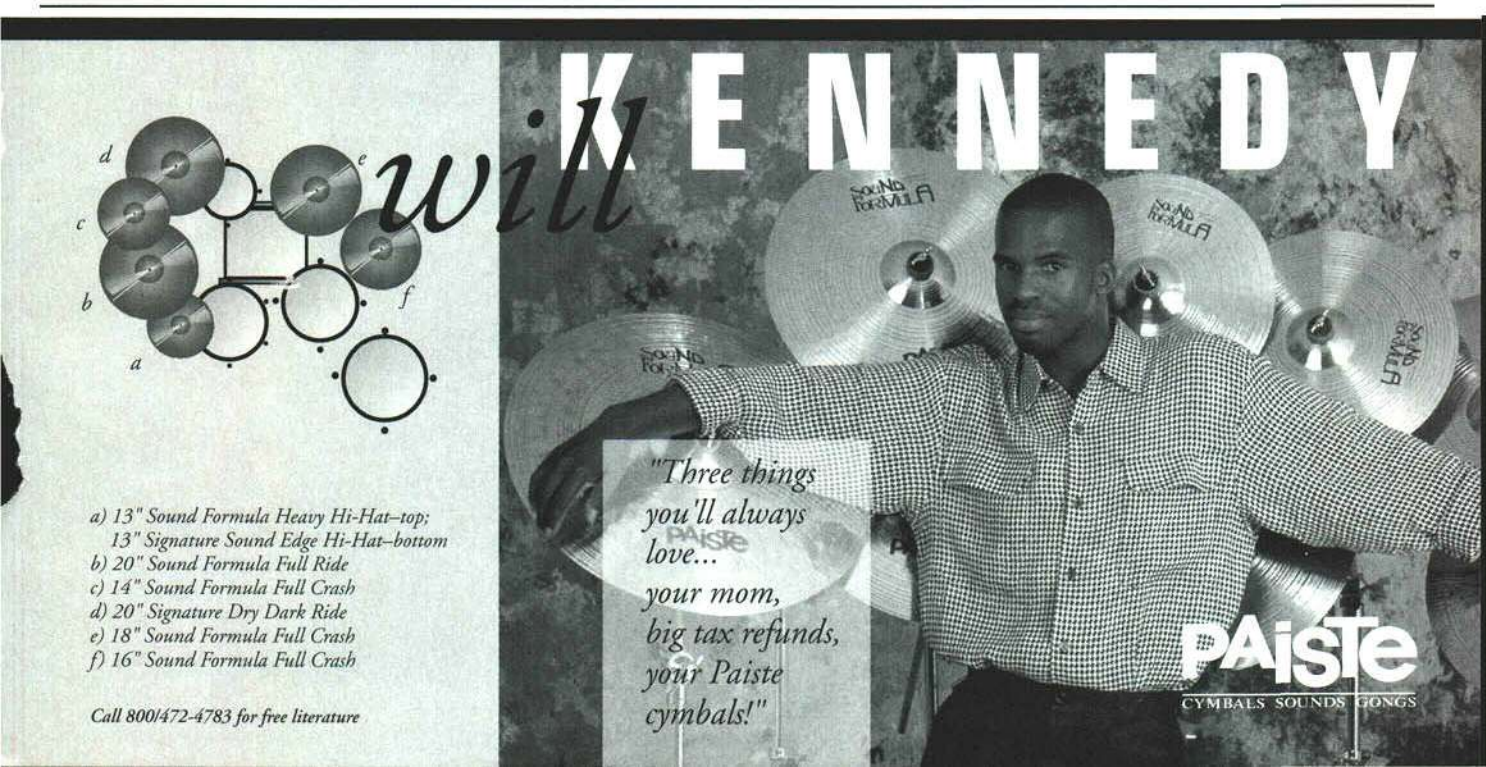
Here are the albums Alvino lists as the ones most representative of his drumming...

Artist	Album Title
Kenny Loggins	Outside From The Redwoods
Stevie Wonder	soundtrack to Jungle Fever
Patrice Rushen	Anything But Ordinary
Brenda Russell	Soul Talkin'
B.B. King	A Tribute To Curtis Mayfield
Tim Heintz	Searching The Heart
Tim Heintz	Tim Heintz
Frank Potenza	Express Delivery
George Shaw & Jetstream	Outuvspace
LTD	Devotion
LTD	Shine On
LTD	Love Magic
Cash McCall	Omega Man

...and here are the ones he listens to most for inspiration.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
Keith Richards	Talk Is Cheap	Steve Jordan
Fourplay	Fourplay	Harvey Mason
Little Village	Little Village	Jim Keltner
Led Zeppelin	Physical Graffiti	John Bonham
Howlin Wolf	Howlin Wolf/ Moanin' In The Moonlight	Sam Lay, Fred Bellow, S.P. Leary
Muddy Waters	Best Of Muddy Waters/ Fathers And Sons	Buddy Miles, Fred Below, Willie Smith, Sam Lay, Francis Clay
George Duke	The Aura Will Prevail	Ndugu Chancier
Steely Dan	The Royal Scam	Bernard Purdie

plus various albums with Al Jackson, Steve Ferrone, Buddy Miles, Jeff Porcaro with Toto, and Clyde Stubblefield with James Brown



you obviously audition well.

AB: I just do what I do; whether that's good or bad, I'm not sure. I'm always comfortable with myself, so I have to put those vibes out to the rest of the band and to the artist.

The section I auditioned with for Sheena's gig was basically the section I ended up playing with. After that we learned to play with each other, which involves playing together and just sitting down and talking it out. I love to talk to people to find out what's on their minds and why they do what they do. I'm always analyzing things.

When it comes to auditioning, I don't really have a method. It's like a session. You never know who you're going to do a session with. You just go in and do what you do for that song and for that artist. With an audition, the song has been completed, so you go in and try to reproduce that to the best of your ability. And it's normally not a matter of underplaying or overplaying that wins you an audition. It's duplicating the record with the right feel.

RF: What was the Sheena gig like?

AB: It was pop music, as opposed to Chaka, which was more of an R&B, Gospel, jazzy thing. Sheena had been working with Prince, L.A. Reid, and Babyface, so it was more electronic, although thank goodness I didn't have to use any. I think that the feeling changes a little on different gigs because of the material that I'm given, but I still play the same way, with all the accents and dynamics. But Sheena is a great artist. Her production was definitely different. Chaka was just raw. With Sheena it was bigger than life.

RF: So you had to think about the visual a little more.

"On this current gig with Bryan Ferry, I have to play the precise part from the record, which is very challenging. We have to play these tunes at the exact tempo every night."

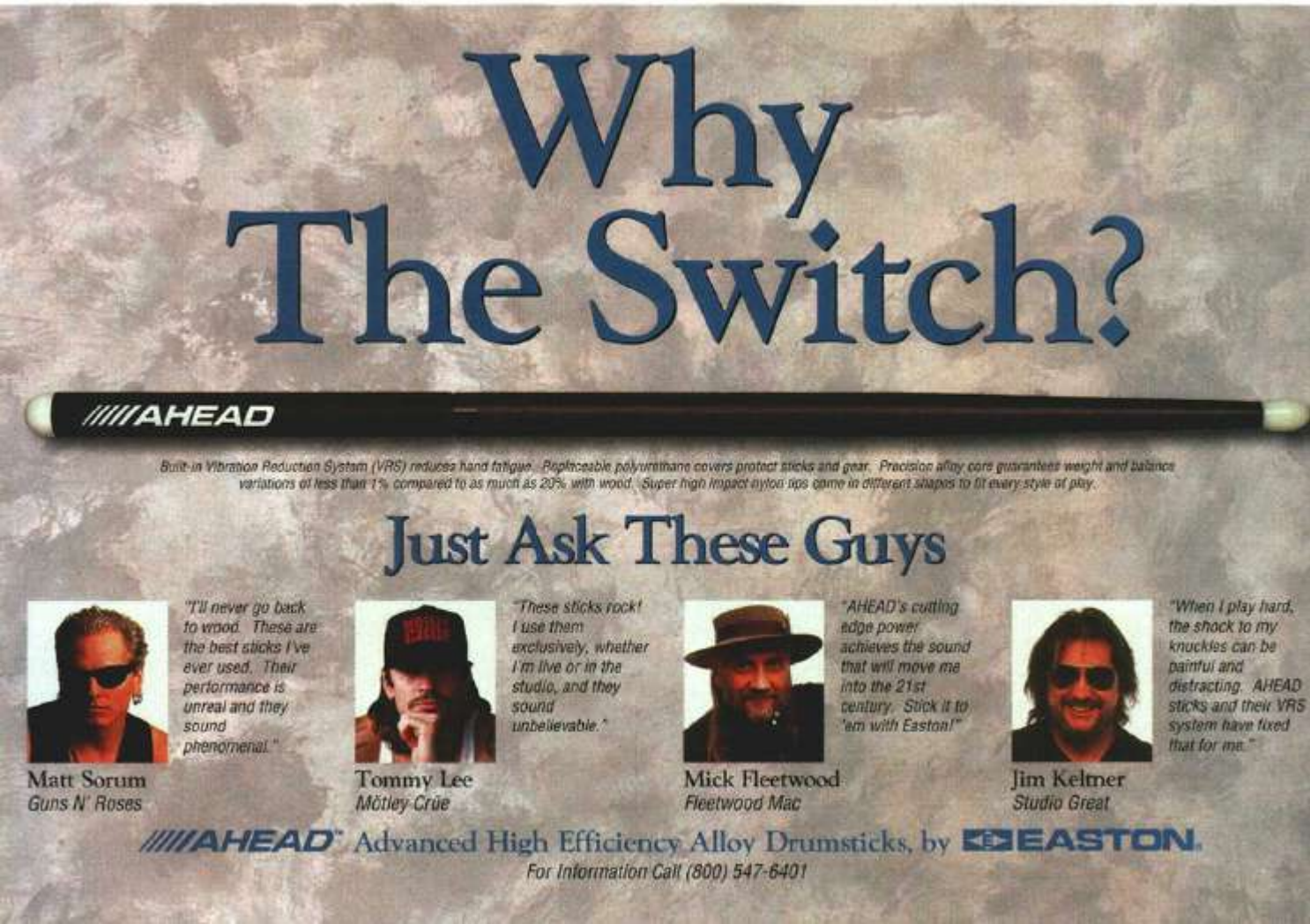
AB: Yes, she was into the dancing. It took me back to my old school, playing for the local singing groups in Chicago when we were copying the Temptations, the Four Tops, and all those guys. If they stopped mid-air with their hand or foot, they wanted me to accent that. It was the same thing with Sheena. It was wonderful because she appreciated that I had that in me.

RF: In your vast experience, which have been the most challenging gigs for you?

AB: I really want to say all of them. But if I had to pick a few, I would have to say Chaka first, because of her diversity and the different types of music she does—I had to play real jazz with brushes and then play the funk and R&B stuff.

Next I would have to say Kenny Loggins' gig, because his music required me to use a lot of independence. My right hand would be doing a certain pattern on the cymbal, my left would be going between the snare drum and a tom-tom, and then my right hand would also be doing something on a tom-tom.

On this current gig with Bryan Ferry, I have to play the precise part from the record, which is very challenging. We have



to play these tunes at the exact tempo every night. Kenny Loggins required that also.

RF: A lot of people might not realize that a Loggins gig would be that demanding.

AB: It is, and I'm really glad I was chosen to do that gig. It really helped me a lot and made me go back and start to think about metronomic time. If you listen to a lot of the older records, playing with a metronome or click track wasn't that prevalent. With Loggins, everything had to be in perfect sync with what was coming out lyrically and with all the other musicians.

The time will take care of itself if you have good musicians. With Loggins, there was a bunch of wonderful musicians. Freddie Washington, the bassist, has a great internal clock. It was always wonderful for us to get that eye contact, and we knew when it was locking. There would just be that little smile. He's been one of my favorites to work with. We've done sessions together. We've worked with Patrice Rushen a lot, as well as some one-shot things.

When I got the chance to do the Loggins gig, I was very happy to work with Freddie and have the opportunity to get inside his head. I like talking to people I work with. It was really wonderful. Loggins wants his live show to sound like the records, so that was a particular challenge. What was interesting was that I came into his project to do a live album. I had to go back and listen to all of the old material. It was a very grueling three weeks of intense listening and playing. The other guys had been through the stuff already, except for some of the older stuff they were rearranging. But I had to learn it in its original form, then relearn it in a new form.

> "It's normally not a matter of underplaying or overplaying that wins you an audition. It's duplicating the record with the right feel."

I remember one day in particular, when I was learning something off his *Leap Of Faith* disc. It was a tom-tom pattern and everybody left the room. I was doing it and then Loggins came back in and said, "Oh, by the way, there's a second part to it." I had to get that second part and connect the two parts. It was a challenge, but it was great. I was learning it with my metronome to make sure everything was even. I had great help from the percussionist, Kevin Ricard. I also knew when I was in the pocket with him because he has a thing he does with the heel of his foot when it's in the pocket. It was really wonderful.

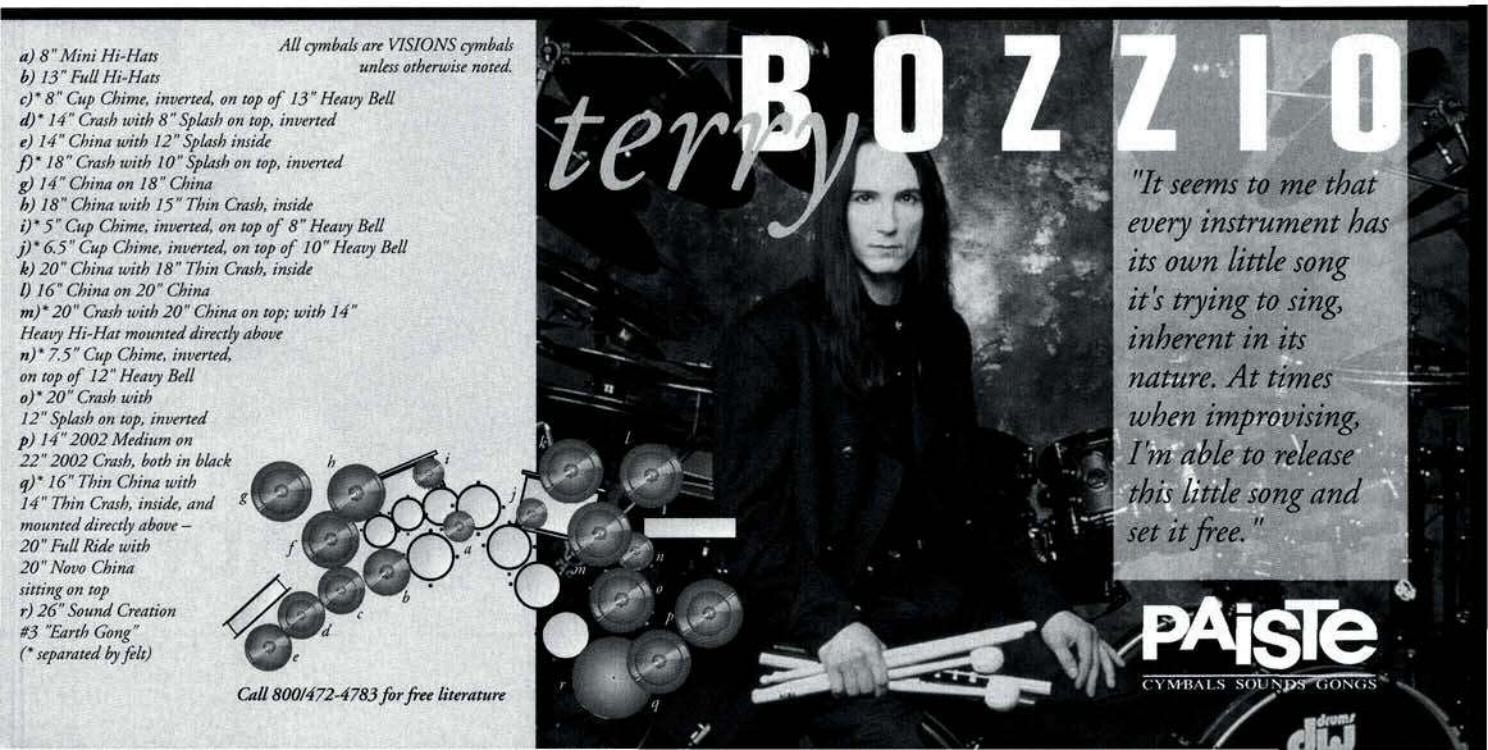
This gig with Bryan Ferry is basically the same thing. I had to learn all the old parts from the original Roxy Music drummer, Paul Thompson, then the stuff that Andy Newmark did, and the new stuff Steve Ferrone did, plus some of the drum machine parts they had programmed over the years. We actually start the set off with "I Put A Spell On You," which is by another artist I played with, Screamin' Jay Hawkins.

RF: Do you have electronics on this gig?

AB: I'm using an *Octapad* for certain sampled sounds. There's a cymbal sound for the beginning of "Mamouna," and a bongo sound for "Wasteland/Windswept," which is two songs put together. "Wasteland" starts out with piano, hi-hat, and a bongo pattern, which goes on for a while. There's an atmospheric space, which he's really into, as well as crescendos and decrescendos on cymbals. I also use electronics at the beginning of the set, when we first come on, and there's a DAT tape with more atmospheric stuff. Then I play timpani and gong sounds from the *Octapad.*

RF: Did you audition for this gig?

AB: Yes, but it was a very indirect kind of thing. I put together a video of some of the artists I've played with, which is the first time I had to do that. The guitar player, David Williams, had originally asked if I was interested when Steve Ferrone had recorded the album but wasn't sure if he wanted to tour. Steve decided to do it, but when they were in L.A., they asked me to come down to look at the show. I thought the show was very interesting and they asked if I would be interested. They were taking the Christmas holiday, which is when Steve left. We set up a rehearsal and I went down and played, which was supposed to only last fifteen minutes. It felt so good to play with Melvin Davis on bass, David Williams on rhythm guitar, Guy



Fletcher on keyboards, and background vocalist Audrey Wheeler that we ended up playing nearly an hour. It was really cool.

I had all of December and about a week and a half of January to get all the songs together, and I had one week of rehearsals. I didn't physically sit down to play my drums until about a week before the rehearsals, because I really wanted to listen. I would listen to one song, write the song out, and then go back and listen again to make sure I had all the parts written out accurately.

RF: If those are the most challenging gigs you've done, which has been the most creative?

AB: I would have to say Kenny Loggins. His stuff was rearranged for that tour, and I remember one song in particular, "This Is It." I had to come up with new ways to play that song, with tom-tom parts and such. We also did a medley of "Footloose/I'm Alright," which was kind of a Cajun, New Orleans second-line feel that incorporated some of my ideas. There were these percussion parts that were happening, and those things had to be really arranged among the percussionists. I decided to make my part very simple because they needed an anchor. I also used a double hi-hat pattern, though, because it was kind of a call-and-response thing. The percussion break was very cool.

RF: Could you choose three studio tracks you've done that you feel represent who you are?

AB: Stevie Wonder did a soundtrack for a Spike Lee movie called *Jungle Fever*. There's a song that I love called "These Three Words," although the drumming isn't very involved. As we were recording the song, Stevie was singing and I tried to react to his words. Certain words made me do things, and towards the end of the song something occurred to me and I made this accent of three hits. So on the outro of the cut, Stevie ad-libbed, "Thank you drummer for hitting me three times." That's kind of a no-no when recording, but I did it anyway and it was left on the record.

I would have to mention a couple of songs I wrote with LTD. One was called "Share My Love," which was a 12/8 ballad with a cool hi-hat pattern. Then there was a song I wrote for my daughter called "April Love." We didn't use the original drum track, because there was too much space. I had to fill the track up with more drums, which I thought hurt the recording. I liked the demo better, actually.

The title track of Brenda Russell's *Soul Talkin'* is cool. When I did this pick-up on the intro, the bassist, Bill Sharp, looked at me and said, "What are you doing?" I played it again and actually tripped myself up, going, "Yeah, where *is* 1?" We figured it out real quick, but I hadn't counted it, I had just done it. When I went back and counted what we did I realized it was this real funky thing. I love the groove that he and I had together.

I thought everything with Loggins felt great. I would use a stick in one hand and a multi-rod in the other. I like playing drums like that. I think that comes from listening to a lot of Jim Keltner.

RF: Can you give any tips for surviving on the road, personally and musically?

AB: I'm used to it now, having traveled around the world month after month, year after year, for over thirty years now. Last year I went to Germany with Joshua Kadison. We left on a Thursday, arrived there Friday, played thirty-five minutes on

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Saturday, and went back home on Sunday. My body didn't even have time to get jet-lagged! But on this last tour with Bryan Ferry, we went from England to Singapore and were on the plane for something like fourteen hours. I usually stay up all day and try to get to bed as late as possible, trying to get my body acclimated to the time zone I'm in.

RF: What about keeping the music fresh?

AB: I'm a very spontaneous person, so I'll play the pocket of the song, but I might do a different drum fill to keep the band on their toes. It's never bothered anyone. I won't do anything totally quirky, but I will do a different drum fill every night. On Ferry's "Slave To Love," I would do a drum fill and break it down on the 1, which was the usual thing for me to do. I did it a couple of times and Bryan and I both agreed it didn't work well. So then I had to do the fill, but then do something on the hi-hat, like opening and closing it.

RF: There is obviously a role one must play in order to work as constantly as you do.

AB: I think you have to be willing to listen to people and make them happy, because this is their lives. The music is already done and now it's up to you to figure out the best way of presenting it to an audience. Now the audience can see it as well as listen to it.

RF: Going from artist to artist, you must have to conform your style to the gig.

AB: Yes. A musician gets hired for the way he or she plays, but the music really dictates that also. Each artist is different, and they want steady growth from project to project. I think that's why some artists change bands; they want to grow. Some people want to use the same band each time. Some people don't even use a band in the studio these days.

I really love the stuff from the '60s, because each individual drummer had his own style and sound, just like back in the '40s and '50s with the bebop and big band drummers. Everybody had a sound. I can always tell my good friend Ndugu Chancler on record, because he has recognizable ride and crash cymbals. We don't hear signatures on records anymore, and I miss that.

RF: Are you still hoping to do a solo thing?

AB: Yes and no. I really don't want the headaches of all the logistics. It's nice to be able to go out and do my two hours and be done. I can come back to my room, call the family, and go eat. I love that. I don't have to worry about ticket sales or paying all the people on the payroll.

RF: In other words, you've seen too much and know too much.

AB: I went through it early on with Cash McCall as part of his band. Then when I got with LTD, it was really full of business stuff, sitting at a table with the manager and business manager, talking to promoters.... What I really want to do is get more into producing. I've had some of my songs recorded by LTD and Tim Heintz. If the band thing happens, it would be cool, but I'm not really pursuing it. There's nothing wrong with being hired as a sideman, after all.

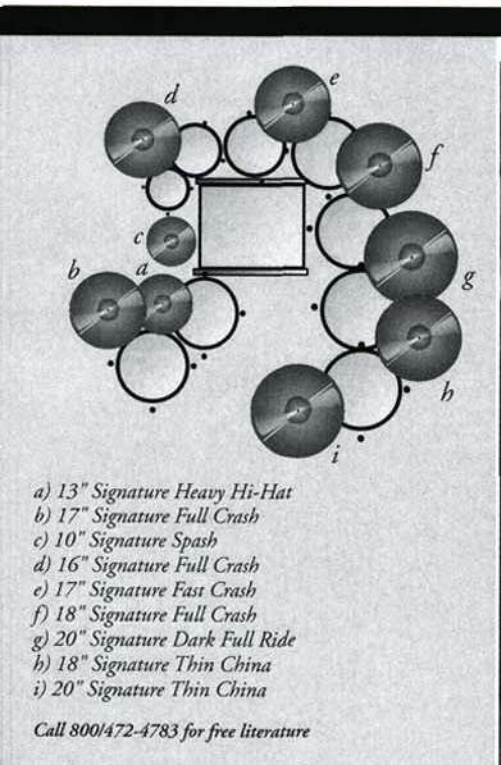
MD's "Drumkit Of The Month"

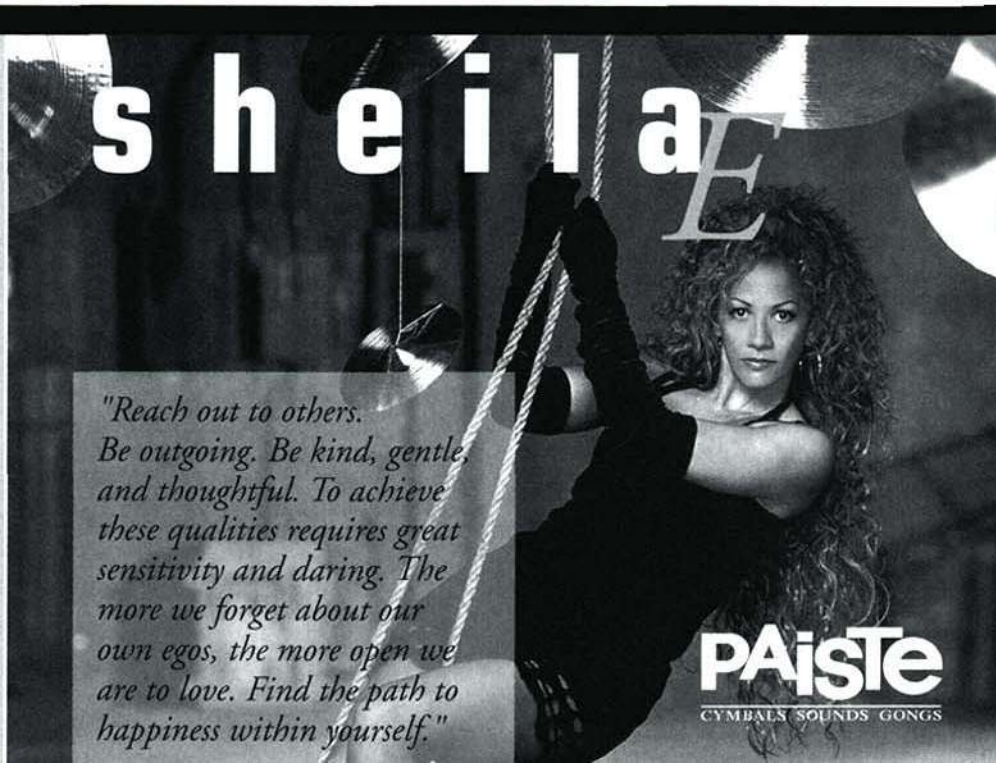
Every drummer is proud of his or her drums, but some go lo special efforts to create very personal kits. These might involve unusual arrangements of drums, special finishes, unique mounting methods, or innovative staging ideas. If you have a kit that you think other drummers would enjoy seeing, *ML)* invites you to send us a photo. We will select photos from among those sent to appear in future issues in *MD's Drumkit Of The Month* department. The criteria for our selection will be kits that are **visually interesting** and/or **musically unusual.** We are **not** looking for kits that are simply **big.**

Photo Requirements

1. Photos must be in color, and of high quality. (35rnm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered. Polaroids cannot be accepted.)
2. You may send more than one view of the kit.
3. Photos should be of drums only; no people should be in the shot(s).
4. Drums should be photographed against a neutral background (a sheet, drape, blank wall, ect.). Avoid "busy" backgrounds such as in your basement, garage, or bedroom.
5. Be sure that those attributes of your kit that make it special are clearly visible in the photo(s).

Send your photo(s) to Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Please note that photos cannot be returned, so don't send any originals you can't bear to part with.





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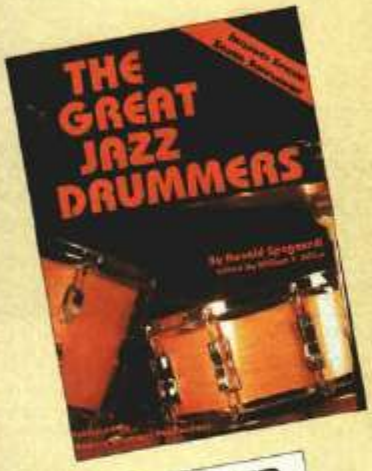

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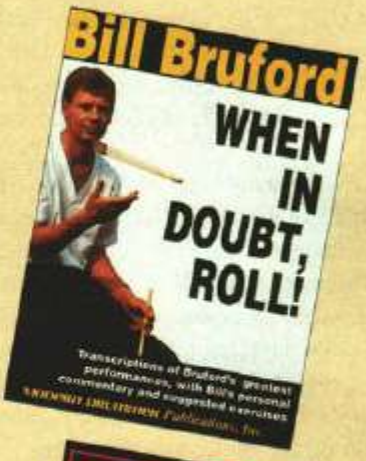

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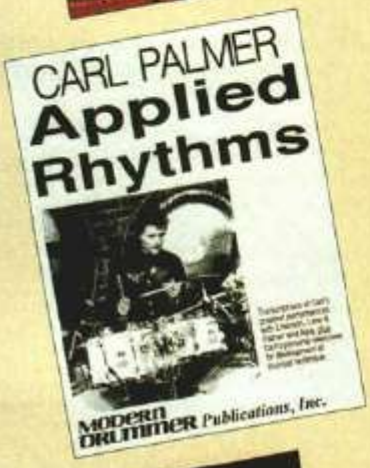

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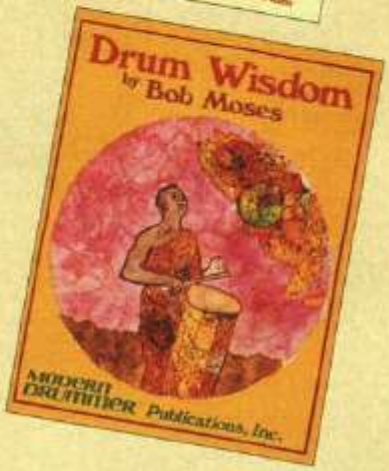

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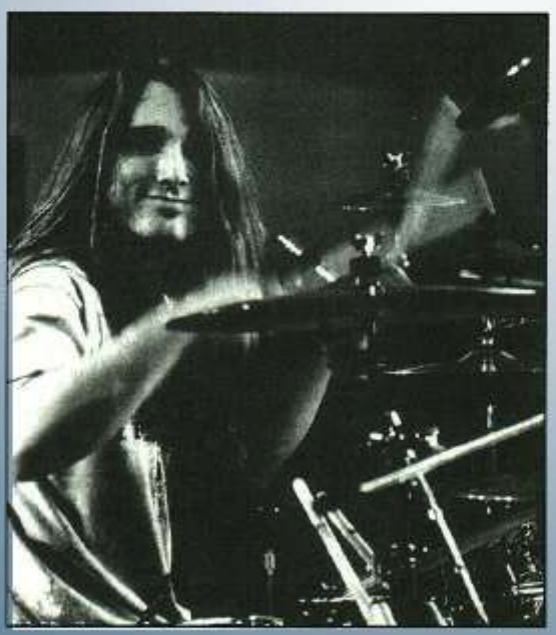
Losing Your Gig And

by Matt Peiken

Dave Abbruzzese didn't know why Pearl Jam guitarist Stone Gossard asked to meet him for lunch. But since they played in a band together, the request didn't seem all that unusual. So on the afternoon of August 16, 1994, Abbruzzese sat down at a table and as Abbruzzese remembers it, Gossard did most of the talking. By the time they left the diner, Abbruzzese was no longer the drummer in Pearl Jam.



"It was out of the blue—I mean *completely* out of the blue," Abbruzzese says nearly a year after his firing. "The band had problems—Lord *knows* we had problems—but they didn't have anything to do with the music. And I was never given any concrete reason why they were canning me. All I know is, at that moment, I felt like my world had just crumbled."

Shock, anger, panic, pain, confusion, depression. In many ways, Abbruzzese experienced a chain of feelings familiar to anybody who loses a job.

But bands aren't ordinary employers; they're made up of people who make and create music together, people who eat, sleep, travel, fight, laugh, and lug gear together. They share secrets and sins, strife and success. Over time, they build indelible friendships, even family-like relationships. And when the music is truly happening, bandmates share moments unlike any other in beauty or bliss.

So when the music stops and, for whatever reason, the ax drops, there's a feeling that perhaps goes deeper and stronger than any other: betrayal.

"It's one thing to get fired—that happens all the time and it's not the issue—it's just the way it happened and the way they dealt with it," says Grant Young, who in October 1994 was kicked out of Soul Asylum. "One of the things that really upset me, after I thought about it a while, was that we all struggled for so long to get somewhere with our music. And finally, after ten years, we got there. Thinking back now, it was like, 'Grant, you pull us up the hill in this rickshaw. When we get there, we'll all enjoy the view. But now that the grunt work is over, we don't need you anymore.' That's what it really felt like."

Young admits to giving his bandmates cause for concern. Most notably, he had problems relaxing in the studio during sessions for Soul Asylum's breakthrough record, *Grave Dancers Union,* and the group brought in a session drummer to

Back Bouncing

complete the album.

But while cutting demos for their follow-up record, Young's bandmates—through their manager—told him they weren't happy with his playing and wanted to use another drummer in the studio. Two weeks later they fired him.

"They didn't communicate with me at all," Young says. "And when I asked them point-blank what the problem was, Dave [Pirner, singer] was very vague with me and Dan [Murphy, guitarist] said there basically was no problem. By the time they fired me, I'd been expecting something like that for a couple of weeks, and it was sort of a relief that at least some decision had been made.

"But it's been pretty depressing, pretty hard to get things going," he adds. "I quit playing music for two or three months just to get away from it. My wife was expecting a baby, and I didn't know what I was going to do."

Abbruzzese had far fewer clues to his fate. Despite what he called a "distant" relationship with singer Eddie Vedder, Abbruzzese saw the sessions for *Vitalogy,* Pearl Jam's 1994 album, as a sign that the band had a quality and potential worth nurturing.

> **"I didn't feel I was even in a real band. I felt like I was in a company, but the fame and money clouded over all that and I was trapped. Whether it's ego or whatever, I enjoyed walking down the street and having someone ask for my autograph."**
>
> *Dave Abbruzzese, formerly of Pearl Jam*

Though others close to Pearl Jam later told Abbruzzese that Vedder simply wanted to get Jack Irons into the band (Irons is credited with hooking Vedder up with the founding members of Pearl Jam), Abbruzzese thinks the reason behind his firing goes deeper.

According to Dave, his appearances in advertising campaigns for various drum companies were a constant sore spot with Vedder, who also didn't take well to Abbruzzese's involvement with drum clinics and other public events outside the band. Among other gripes, Vedder complained that Abbruzzese had too many cymbals on his kit and that it looked "too rock."

Abbruzzese also never quite heard the end of his appearance on the cover *of Modern Drummer* in December 1993. "Eddie's achieved a lot of success, but he doesn't want people to think he likes the fact that he's successful. He'd rather whine about

it," Dave says. "I thought our success was great. I enjoyed what I was doing, but I couldn't say it to him or around him, because he would get mad and freak out about it.

"I appreciated looking out and seeing people from all walks of life getting off on our music, and that had nothing to do with whether I agreed with their political views or not. But that really polarized me to Eddie, who was very concerned about his image—and especially about who was coming to our shows. And my attitude about that, he felt, really undermined his efforts to retain credibility. I didn't see the world the same way that Eddie did. And instead of accepting the fact that people can be different from him, he decided that the way I felt was the *wrong* way.

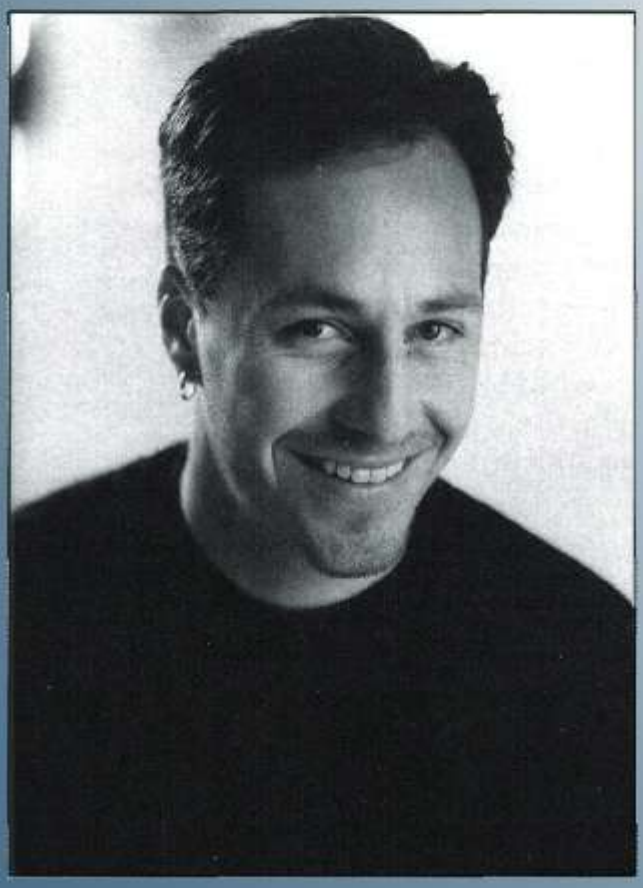
"Jeff [Ament, bassist] said that, logically, I was the best drummer the band could have, but he didn't feel we connected well enough spiritually," Dave adds. "I was also told we weren't communicating well as a band—and I had to find out about Eddie getting married through the *National Enquirer*! What it all boils down to is that the rest of the group all gave in to Eddie's whim and had me fired."

Drummers aren't the only musicians dismissed from bands, but they often find themselves scapegoats for deeper internal problems within a group. According to Grant Young, "When things don't feel right, it's the easiest thing in the world to pin it on the drummer. After all, the drummer's responsible for the feel, right? Well, that's not always the case. There's a lot of room for singers and guitarists to move around in the music and be quirky. And if they're having an off night, they can kind of cover it up. But people look to the drummer as that anchor holding everything together, and that's what the drummer does in a lot of ways. But a lot of times it's hard to pinpoint what's off. So for some guys, it's like, when you can't explain what's wrong, it has to be the drummer's fault. That's the way a lot of people think."

Financial success, international touring, and emotional commitment kept Dave Lombardo in Slayer more than eleven years, despite clashes stemming from Lombardo's commitment to family life. "With Slayer, we had something good for a long time," Dave explained in his recent *MD* cover story. "And when you have something good, you try as hard as you can to make it work. You deal with the garbage and move on. But it was so destined for me and Slayer to break up. Our personalities were just so different. Even in the best of times, there always seemed to be some kind of friction between me and Kerry [King, guitarist]. But it really didn't come to a head until I started developing a home life.

"Slayer became stifling in a way that I didn't realize until late in the game," he adds. "But I also felt pressure that what I tried to give them wasn't good enough. I'd try something different and they'd say 'No.' Most of the time, they'd program the drum parts they wanted to hear on a drum machine, and I had to stick to that basic idea. It wasn't a cool, fun vibe to create music under, and it didn't have much feeling to me. We didn't relate well to each other."

Even musicians who knowingly help orchestrate their departures can be surprisingly scarred by the fallout. "I hadn't been happy with our direction musically for quite a while, but I thought I'd just hang in there until they wouldn't let me anymore," says Steve Bowman, who in late 1994 left after three years with Counting Crows. "I honestly thought my contribution was more important than it turned out to be. I thought I was indispensable. But we had a band meeting and it was presented to me that they didn't want me in the band if I was going to be unhappy. I asked if there was any way I could try to get



"It was a total dream band for me—cover of *Rolling Stone,* a tour with the Rolling Stones. I got my ya-yas out. But deep down, I wanted to leave. The hardest thing was telling my mom I wasn't a rock star anymore."

Steve Bowman, formerly of Counting Crows

"People look to the drummer as that anchor holding everything together. But a lot of times it's hard to pinpoint what's off. So for some guys, when you can't explain what's wrong, it has to be the drummer's fault."

formerly of SoulAsylum

hip to the direction the band was going in. But I asked that out of shock. If I'd stayed, I would have been faking it."

According to Barbara Ybarra, a Bay Area family relationship counselor, all these scenarios are symptomatic of unhealthy relationships that, without awareness and attention, are destined to dissolve. "It's easy to see the lack of communication here. People aren't being honest and up front about their feelings, even with themselves, until it's too late to resolve the problems without upheaval.

"Bands are a lot like families," Ybarra explains, "but they also have some additional challenges. You've got different personalities, people who might not have anything in common except for the music. You're also dealing with egos—your own and those of everybody else in the band. And that's workable as long as everybody's comfortable with the band direction. But as soon as you have concerns or questions about something, it's important to speak up. Be honest with yourself about why something bothers you and then be honest with the others in your band. Don't ignore problems or assume they'll go away. If you address them early enough and deal with them maturely, you'll almost always take care of them before they mushroom on you. Even if you don't agree on something, there's always a compromise. Talk; it sounds so simple and cliche, but you'd be surprised how many people forget to do that."

Participating together in activities unrelated to music—hiking, going to a movie, band/family picnics—can dramatically promote harmony within a band. "That's how you build strong, lasting friendships," Ybarra says. "Doing things like that will help you look at the others in your band as real people. You learn different things about them and value them as more than a drummer or singer. It may be easy to find another guitar player, but you may not find it so easy to give up on a friend when times are tough. It could mean the difference between working through a problem or splitting up your band."

Other factors, though, can contribute to a musician's inner conflict, confusion, and frustration, skewing the overall picture. The celebrity and notoriety that go with playing in "the biggest new band in America," as *Rolling Stone* once called Counting Crows, clouded Bowman's judgment and kept him in the group longer than he would otherwise have stayed. "It was a total dream band for me," he admits, "cover of *Rolling Stone,* a tour with the Rolling Stones. I got my ya-yas out. Deep down, I wanted to leave, but I couldn't. The hardest thing was telling my mom I wasn't a rock star anymore. But the sense of relief really calmed me. After the last six months in the band, I didn't realize what kind of weight I'd been carrying. I think I'd be much more resentful if I had left the band before I tasted any of the success. It's nice to be able to buy a car and a house and have all that money. But that doesn't keep you going spiritually. I had to be true to myself."

Parting with your band, voluntarily or not, tests loyalties among friends and others within the band's social and professional camps. Some people comfort, others turn cold—influencing the psychological and emotional healing.

"Not only were people I loved and cared about in the band taken away from me, but so was the crew," Abbruzzese says. "My drum tech, Jimmy, stayed with me, and that made me feel great. I've stayed in touch with the other guys to some extent, but it's all surface now.

Chuck Morris, formerly of Arsenio Hall

I'm out of the small circle and it's awkward for them. A lot of those guys think the same way I do about the whole thing, but they've got their jobs to think about. There's this imaginary line they had to draw, and I understand that."

Relating to ousted musicians is often like walking on eggshells for fans and others removed from the situation. And for the musician, some encounters can seem like a slap in the face. "I play on this softball team on Wednesday nights," Bowman says, "and afterwards we go to this bar where the owner knows who I am. The other night, these people there came up and asked me to play percussion while they sang 'Happy Birthday' for this girl. I figured, 'Sure, why not?' So I'm beating on glasses and the napkin container, and afterwards this other girl comes up and puts something in my shirt pocket. I'm thinking she knows who I am and that she's giving me her phone number. But I look in there and it turns out she dropped thirty-five cents in my pocket, and I thought, 'Wow, is this what I'm reduced to?' I guess she figured I needed it."

Abbruzzese, though, has found support at nearly every turn. "I get hundreds of letters a week. And aside from the ones that say 'you *were* such a great drummer,' it's been amazing and really supportive. But a lot of people just don't know how to react. If they think I *was* such a great drummer, wait until they hear what I'm working on now. Other people tell me they're really excited about what I'm going to do next, and I'm really excited to show them, because it's going to knock their socks off." (Dave is also producing the debut of his yet-unnamed band.)

Drummers, it seems, instinctively turn to other drummers for understanding. Young, who had met Abbruzzese at the MTV Music Awards, phoned him after getting fired. The two have talked several times since in what has developed into a "support group for the musically mistreated," as Young puts it. Others in the informal network include Stan Lynch, who had left Tom Petty's band after twenty years, and former Spin Doctors guitarist Eric Schenkman.

"The last thing I ever wanted to do was play drums again," Max Weinberg told *Musician* magazine when asked about Bruce Springsteen's 1989 breakup of the E Street Band. "It was all I had done from the time I was a little kid until the age of thirty-nine. I wanted to break away. I discussed it for five hours with Ringo one night, sitting on the terrace of Bill Wyrnan's house on the Mediterranean. I was trying to deal with what you do when you're in such a big act and it breaks up. Ringo really took care of me that week. The guy made me breakfast. I'm not at all trying to compare my experience to that of the Beatles, but when you lose that thing, the emotions are the same."

"I got great support from other drummers—lots of letters," adds Bowman. "I called up Troy Lucketta [of Tesla] a week after I met him, just to talk to somebody. He was so cool. He insisted I come over—he wouldn't let me mope. We barbecued, we watched videos. I've even got a kit over at his house now and we've swapped stuff. Troy didn't need anything from me, but he's just been so great. And that's indicative of the support I've been getting."

Winners NEVER Quit!

Dave Abbruzzese

Dave Lombardo

Grant Young

Don't Quit

When things go wrong as they sometimes will;
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill;
When the funds are low, and the debts are high;
And you want to smile, but have to sigh;
When care is pressing you down a bit—
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.
Success is failure turned inside out;
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt;
And you can never tell how close you are;
It may be near when it seems afar.
So, stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things go wrong that you mustn't quit.

—Author Unknown—

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Abbruzzese also got backing from the manufacturers he'd built relationships with during his time with Pearl Jam. "Sabian, Drum Workshop, and Pro-Mark believed in me, and it was great that they stuck by me. It proved to me that there are good people and companies that have integrity out there, and it was nice to feel that my relationships with them were based on friendships, not just how big a band I play in. It would have devastated me if any of them had changed their tune. It's so gratifying that these people are behind me and excited about the things I'm doing now."

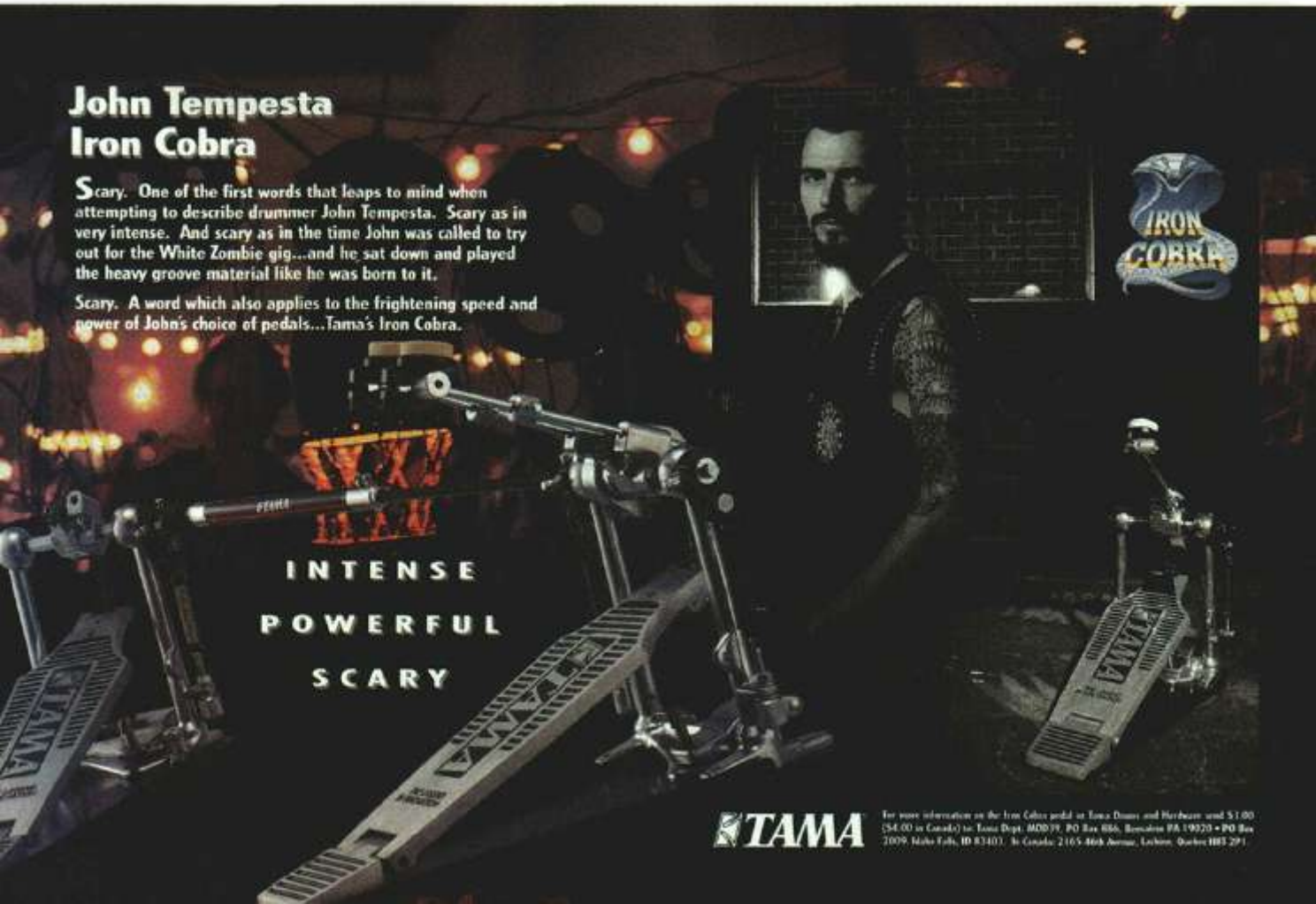
Ultimately, music directly influenced each drummer's recovery. Playing the drums again not only proved an emotional outlet for them, but lent perspective to their individual situations in ways talking couldn't. "I don't know what's going to happen, but I'm having a great time doing it," says Bowman, who's playing in a Bay Area band called Third Eye Blind. "I told them I don't mind lugging my own gear, but I need to have fun. That's the only requirement."

Chuck Morris, who spent five and a half years drumming for Arsenio Hall's now-defunct late-night television show, has gone on to session and club work around Los Angeles. He also has a new band called Common Sense. "Even though the show had run its course in some ways, I was disappointed when it stopped. But much as I liked it, I didn't realize how much I missed playing a whole set, or just playing a whole tune instead of a minute or minute and a half. I got back to playing shows, and doing different situations, and it rejuvenated me. After a couple of years with Arsenio, the excitement of the show and of being on TV had worn off. It was a job and it was steady money. But now I'm playing *music* again and it's great."

Abbruzzese spent the immediate months after his firing writing and recording music with Supertramp vocalist Roger Hodgson, and working in New York with Billy Cox, Noel Redding, and Eric Schenkman on a Jimi Hendrix tribute record. "I also went down to Texas and started playing with my old friends, just to get in touch with why I play music, to make sure Pearl Jam didn't take that away from me.

"I discovered that what Pearl Jam did take away was the fame part of it, the illusion," Dave continues. "But that part doesn't matter anyway, because it's here today, gone tomorrow. It made me see how unhealthy a situation I'd really been in for the past year. I didn't feel I was even in a real band. I felt like I was in a company, but the fame and money clouded over all that, and I was trapped in it. Whether it's ego or whatever, I enjoyed walking down the street and having someone ask for my autograph. I didn't want to give that up; I wanted to work through whatever problems there were. But after I got fired, it blew the illusion out of the water. And what I was left with was my belief in myself and my ability. I'd lost touch with all that. But getting back to Texas, hangin' out with people I really respect and just making music, felt so great. It was life-affirming."

Grant Young has spent much of his time writing music in the hope of putting a band together. He also plans to study carpentry in the fall. But with "no reason to stay" in Minneapolis, Young and his wife are considering leaving the city for a farm. "Dave



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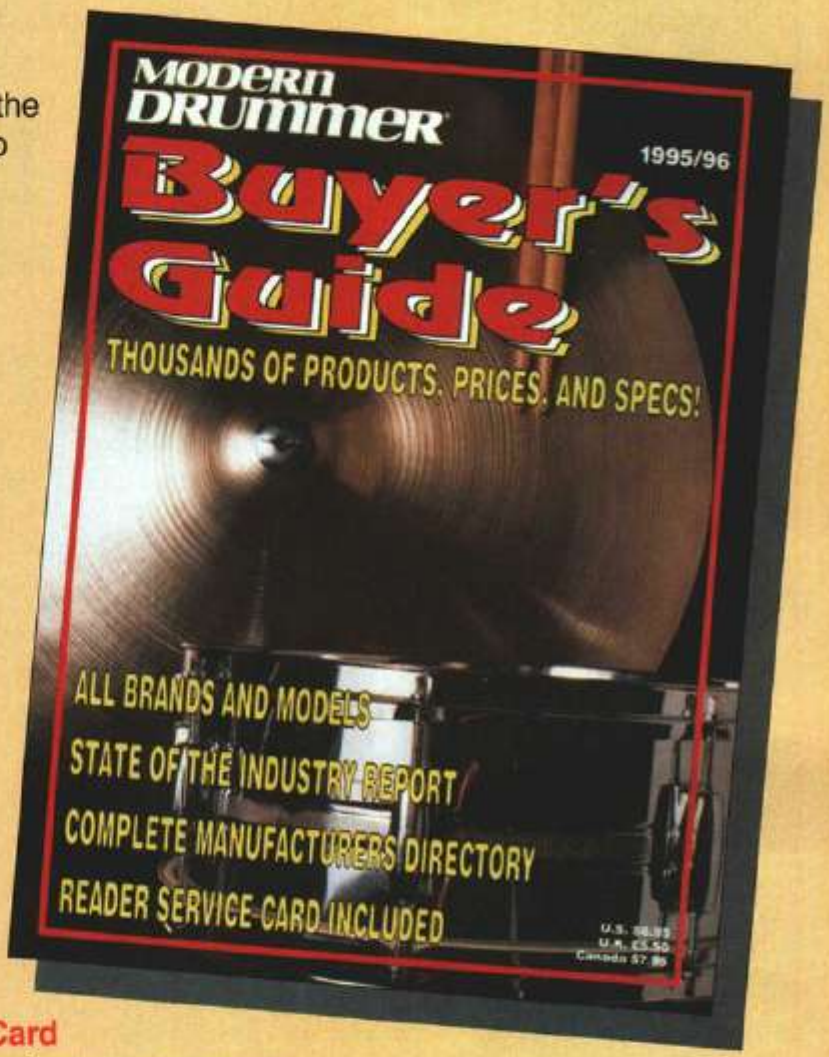

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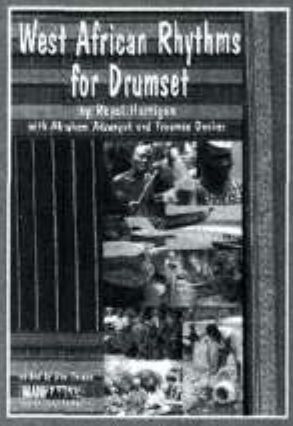

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has been very inspiring because he went and recorded right after he got fired," Young says, "and I was impressed that he just jumped right back on the horse. But I've been playing drums for ten years and I'm just not banking on that being what I'm going to do for the rest of my life. I've always thought that way. I always thought being a pro musician was a treat, but I guess I did get kind of used to it. I'm still playing the drums once in a while—I'll never just give it up—but it's not something I ever want to count on again."

Young, as it turns out, isn't the only one taken by Abbruzzese's rebound. "Eddie called here once when I was up in New York doing an in-store at Sam Ash," Abbruzzese says, "and he commented about how I could possibly have the nerve to show my face in public after what had happened. He was bummed that I had the ability to rise above it all and not be ashamed."

Getting fired from a band doesn't necessarily reflect on your ability to do the job, adds Morris, who advises any dumped musician to look internally for confidence. "Put your craft first and hone that," he says. "Don't worry about your next connection, because the things that got you the gig in the first place are the things that will get you the next one. Don't crawl away and hide. Keep your contacts alive. Keep your head and don't change what you do unless *you* think you need to change."

For his part, Abbruzzese says he wishes Pearl Jam future success and hopes the change at the drum stool helps the band "achieve a level of communication that I always felt belonged but was missing. They can't fire me from caring about them and from the belief I had in them, but they did take away the trust. Still, a lot of the sourness has already lifted and the rest will lift someday, and what I'll be left with is three and a half years of memories, mostly good ones.

"It's like with your first girlfriend," Dave continues. "You think it's true love, but then you break up. There are some hard feelings at first, but then they die down and five years later you think about that person and wonder how they're doing."

Still, Abbruzzese adds, he took comfort in the surprisingly positive spins a few others put on the split. "When I was still in Pearl Jam, the 'Rock Line' guys asked me to do this International Drum Month call-in radio show with Stan Lynch, Alex Van Halen, Chad Smith, and Matt Sorum. I got fired in between the time I said I'd do it and the time of the show, but it was still a really good night. Stan had just left Tom Petty and he had great insight into the weirdness of it all. Then Neil Peart called up and said the perfect thing. He was going around to all the other guys in the studio and saying hi, and when he got to me he said, 'Dave, I'm really happy to hear you got rid of your sidemen.' And I thought, man, that's so rockin'!"

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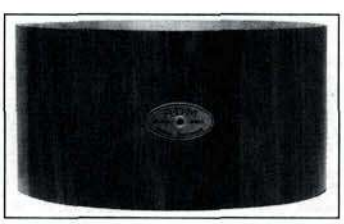

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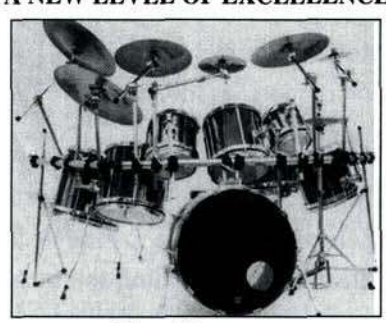

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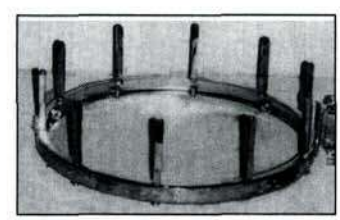

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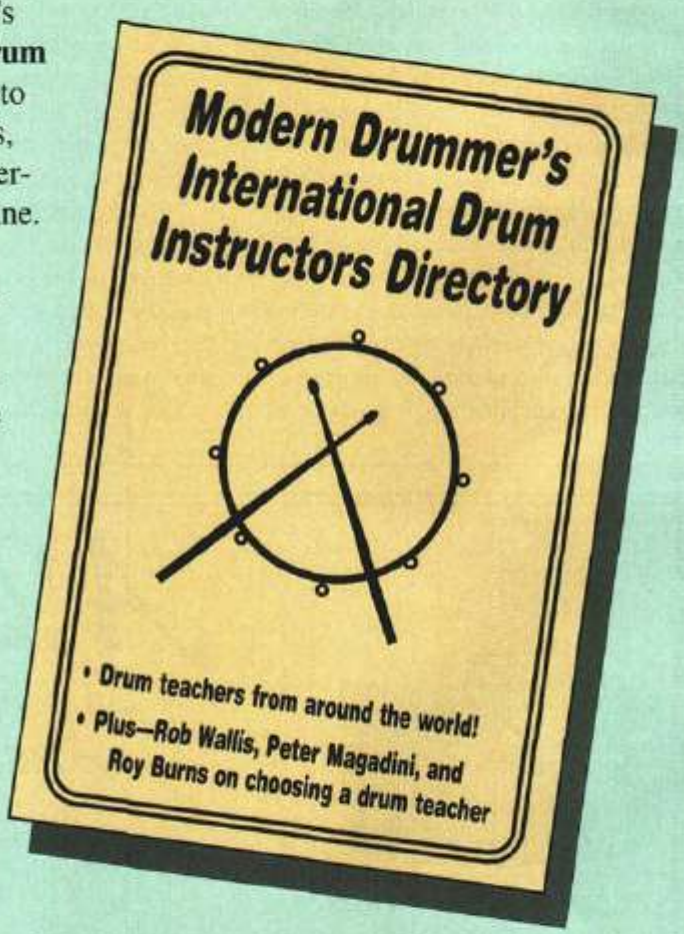

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Rhythmic Transposition

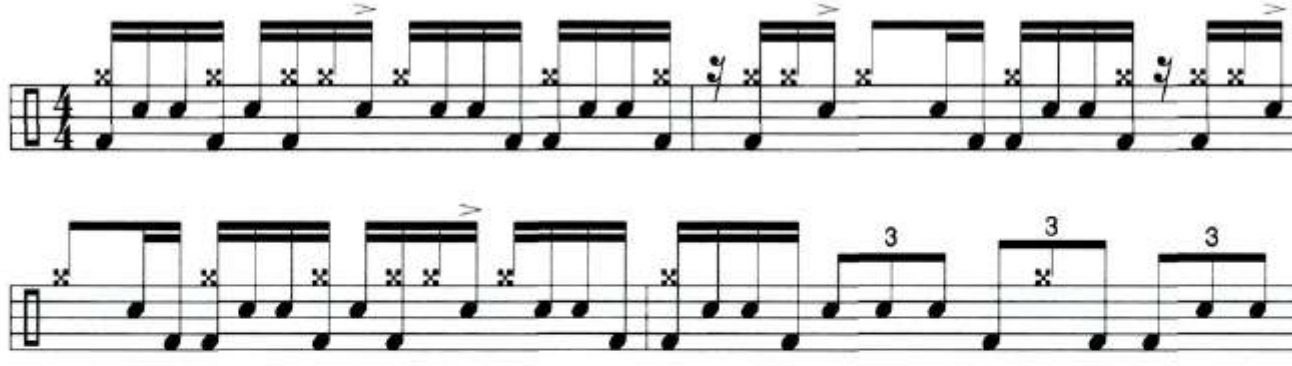
by Paul DeLong

When I listen to my favorite drummers play, the thing that pleases me the most is their ability to play musical phrases on the drumset. This is something that I strive for constantly in my own playing, as I try to weed out all the meaningless "licks and tricks."

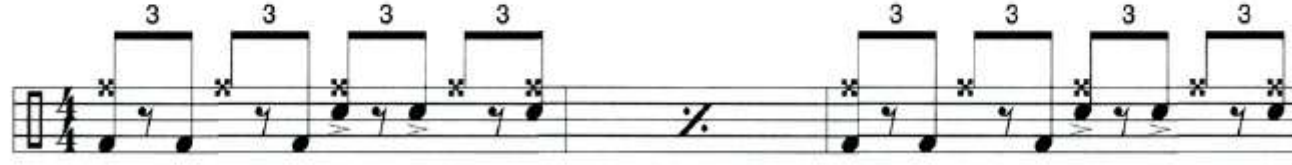
One way to develop this sense of phrasing is by using a device called rhythmic transposition, where a basic idea is shifted so that its beginning note occurs in different locations within a bar or across the bar line. The following examples serve to illustrate this technique.

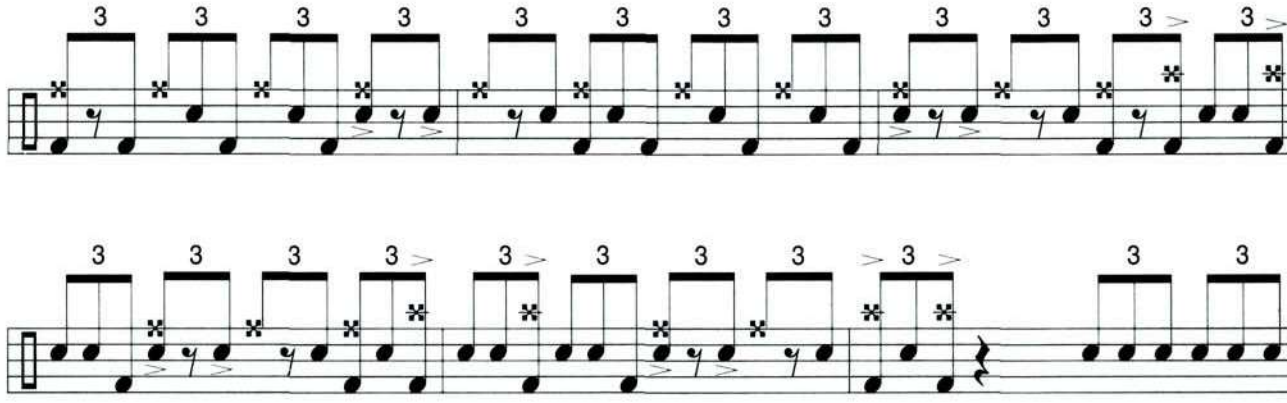
The first example is by Ricky Sebastian, from Herbie Mann's *Opalescence* disc. On "Comin' Home," Ricky plays a very simple but effective break based on quarter-note-triplets, which fits the reggae feel of the tune perfectly. This is a three-beat phrase starting on the last triplet partial of beat 3 in the first measure. (The tempo for this example is quarter note = 144.)

On Los Lobotomys' self-titled first release, Vinnie Colaiuta plays the following solo in the tune "All Blues." This example is the first four bars of one of the eight-bar breaks that Vinnie plays near the end of the tune. Although the tune is played with a reggae feel, he plays this three-beat phrase in a 16th-note linear style. This contrast is again very effective. (The tempo here is quarter note = 120.)

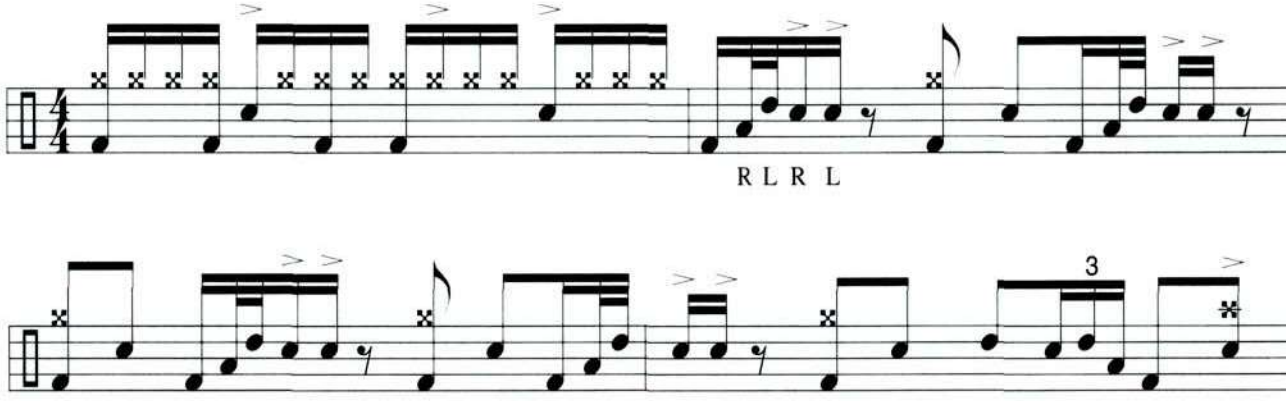


The next example is again by Vinnie, from his excellent self-titled solo disc. On "Slink," he reacts to a rhythmic figure that the trumpet plays, and then builds the idea from there. This is an example of playing phrases within the time feel without disturbing the groove. This is a five-beat phrase beginning on beat 3 of the third measure. (The tempo here is quarter note = 200.)

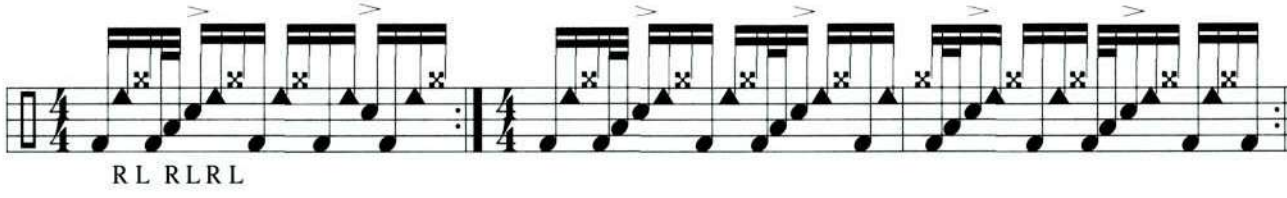




The next example is of Steve Smith with Steps Ahead, from a video of the band's performance at the Stuttgart Jazz Festival. On "Well In That Case...," Steve plays the following as a lead-in to the repeat of the first A section. Since it's a more broken phrase, make sure that you are playing it accurately and that you can count the basic quarter-note pulse through the figures (The tempo here is quarter note = 120.)



Now that you understand the concept, try creating your own ideas by transposing some of your favorite phrases. Here's one of my creations taken from a great David Garibaldi groove. David's pattern is the first measure, and my transposed version is in measures two and three. (Play this at about quarter note = 96.)



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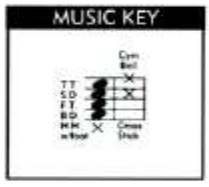
Cascara For Drumset

by Jon Belcher



"Cascara" refers to the stick patterns played by timbale performers in traditional Cuban music. While clave is the foundation or spine of Cuban music, cascara is probably the most compelling rhythmic signature the music has produced. This article will focus on the basic cascara pattern most often used. (There are many subtle variations.)

Here is the basic cascara pattern:

In Cuban music cascara is played on either the cowbell, the cymbal, or (most often) on the shell of the timbale (called playing *paila).* By applying the basic cascara pattern to the drumset, you can come up with some interesting and challenging patterns.

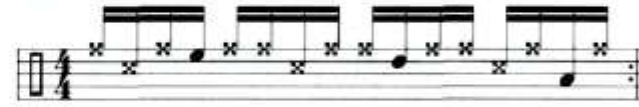
The following exercises should help you incorporate the cascara into your arsenal. You will notice three basic approaches for applying it to the drumset—rudimental (linear coordination), layered (independent coordination), and unison (hands and/or feet together).

Practice the hand exercises (1 - 10) first while tapping quarter notes with both feet. Then add the bass drum/hi-hat ostinatos that are notated at the end of the article.

In the first two examples, accents outline the cascara pattern. Start with single strokes, first using alternate sticking (R,L,R,L). Once you're comfortable with that, play all of the accented notes with the right hand.

The following example uses the sticking from the previous example, but moves the right hand to either a cymbal bell, a cowbell, or the rim of a drum. I think of this as right-hand lead (cascara with the right hand), with ghost notes on snare filling all the holes.

Next is a useful variation that moves the left hand between toms and cross-stick on the snare.



The next pattern continues the cascara with the right hand, but adds clave with the left, played as a cross-stick on the snare. Note that we are playing the 2/3 configuration of the "son" clave, which coincides with the cascara configuration as shown. If the 2/3 clave is reversed to 3/2, then the cascara pattern would also be reversed by playing beats 3 and 4 first.

The following is another pattern reflecting traditional Cuban music. Here the left hand is meant to approximate the sound of congas, and is similar to what a timbale player might do.

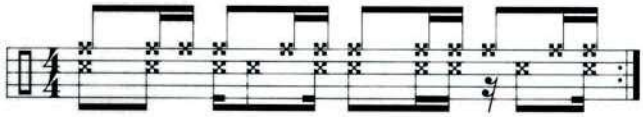
Here is a non-traditional variation I find useful as a samba groove (adding the appropriate part with the feet). The left hand plays the bossa-nova accent pattern, making this a Cuban/Brazilian hybrid.

Here is another Cuban/Brazilian hybrid. This one uses a street samba pattern on cross-stick snare against the cascara on cymbal bell.

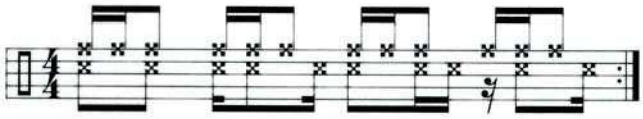
Next is an approach that worked great for a double-time feel out of any 8th-note groove such as rock or cha cha.

This example uses "unison" hands playing cascara on ride cymbal and snare. This technique is a good way to read and play "cascara type" ensemble figures with the band.

In the next example the left hand leads with the cascara. A good jazz samba variation, the cymbal part also works well played on hi-hat like a swing pattern.

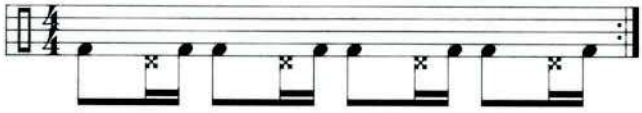


Finally, this pattern again leads with the left hand playing cascara.

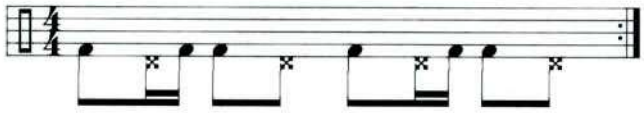


Once you are comfortable with all of the previous examples, add the following bass drum/hi-hat foot patterns to them.

Samba



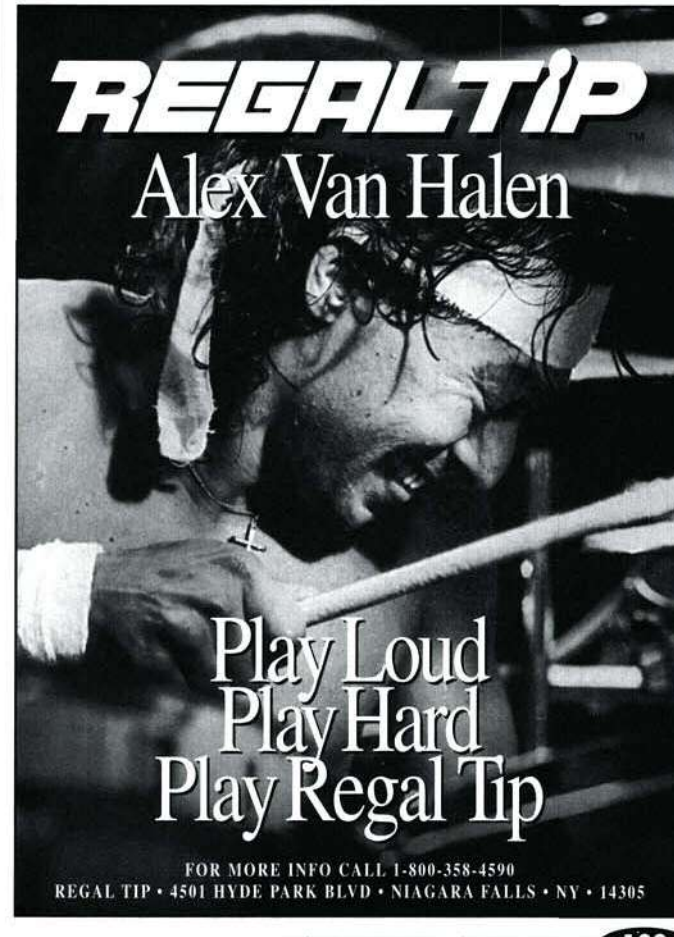
Fast Samba (variation)



The last foot example is a traditional New Orleans pattern that becomes the Cuban bass "tumbao" if you leave out bass drum on beats 1 and 3. :

Once you've practiced these examples, try making up your own. And be sure to remember the traditional origins as a reference point. Also, listen to recordings of the great Tito Puente (anything with "mambo" in the title). He will give you plenty of inspiration.

Jon Belcher is a clinician for the Ludwig Drum Company and the author of Drumset Workouts (Polyrhythms And Independent Coordination Applied To Contemporary Grooves), *a Hal Leonard Publication.*

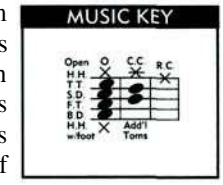


Matt Cameron: "Black Hole Son"

Transcribed by Vincent DeFrancesco

Photo by Kevin Westenberg

This month's *Rock Charts* features Soundgarden's Matt Cameron, from last year's hugely successful *Superunknown.* It was hard to miss this track as it was all over MTV, its eeriness seeming to strike a chord with fans. As for the drumming, Matt lays down a slammin' track that bubbles with originality, both in what he plays and in his up-front sound—there's no question who's driving the band. The odd-phrase guitar/bass riff appearing later in the song (written in 5/4 in the chart) is a Soundgarden specialty: heavy rock with a twist.



3
5
3

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5B

PAUL J. BANNERMAN
ETOBICOKE, ONTARIO
707

ROBERT BARDEN
ST. LOUIS, MO
SD2

BRETT BARNES
FT. JOHNSON, NY
707

SCOTT CARMICHAEL
SPARTA, TN
5B

VIN D'AGOSTINO
HARRISON, NY
2BL

FABIANO M. DAGAMA
ORANGE, CA
5B

FLOYD DARDEN
TREVOSE, PA
7A

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Syncopation Accent Exercises: Part 1

by Dave Hammond

This study is designed to develop hand technique through a series of exercises utilizing single- and double-stroke rolls, flams, and paradiddles. While developing technical ability in the hands, the study should also give you an idea of the variety of ways to musically interpret rhythmic phrases.

The rhythmic phrases or song needed for this study can be written by the individual player or can be taken from other materials. Pages 37 through 44 of Ted Reed's *Progressive Steps To Syncopation For The Modern Drummer* work well for this study. Please note that the rhythmic song should consist of syncopated rhythms using note and rest values no smaller than 8th notes.

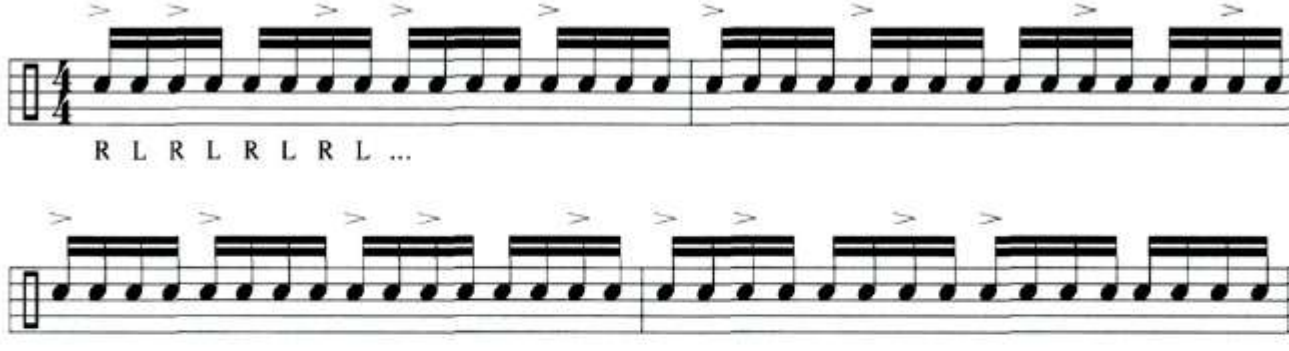
There are several things you should keep in mind while playing the following exercises. First, the exercises will always be played with two distinct dynamic levels happening simultaneously: the accented rhythmic song, which you are reading, and the unaccented background pattern, which you superimpose over the song. Second, the exercises must be interpreted in different time feels. For instance, the song will be felt much differently in a swung 8th-note feel than in a straight 8th-note or 16th-note feel.

Finally, it is extremely important that you explore the metronome with these exercises, always working on expanding the horizons of slow and fast tempos while playing them cleanly and accurately. Technical advancement comes only after you've mastered the ability to listen to yourself critically, paying special attention to the details mentioned above.

Alternating 16th-Note Variation

Playing a pattern of alternating 16th notes (R,L,R,L), accent the rhythmic song. In this variation the notes of the song will always be played by the hand you begin or lead with, because 8th notes—on or off the beat—will always fall to that hand. The following phrase is taken from Exercise 1 of the Ted Reed book:

Superimposing the 16th notes over this phrase, you will play this:



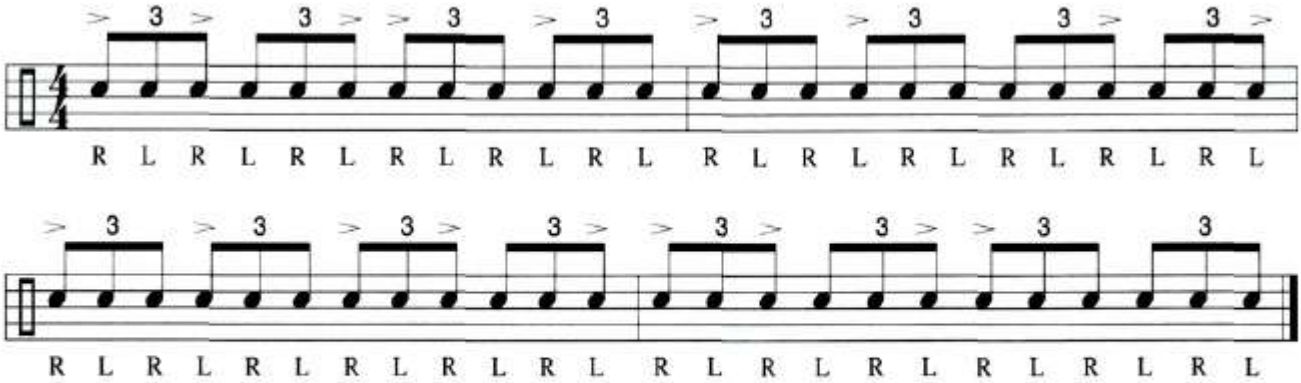
Remember to always achieve two distinct volume levels: loud for the accented song notes and soft for the unaccented background notes. Also play the exercise leading with your dominant hand first, and then learn it leading with the opposite hand.

Alternating 8th-Note-Triplet Variation

Now play a pattern of alternating 8th-note triplets and accent the song. The song notes will now appear in both hands, depending on where the accents are, because we are dividing each beat into three parts (via the 8th-note triplets). The second 8th note of each beat will always fall on the last partial of the triplet, creating a swung 8th-note feel.

Read:

Play:



It is helpful to keep in mind while learning this variation that beats 1 and 3 will always be played with the lead hand and 2 and 4 with the other.

Alternating 16th-Note Variation Rolled

Using alternating 16th notes, roll only those notes that are the unaccented superimposed notes. Again, the notes of the song will appear only in the hand you lead with, and the other hand will sustain a roll throughout.

Read:

Play:

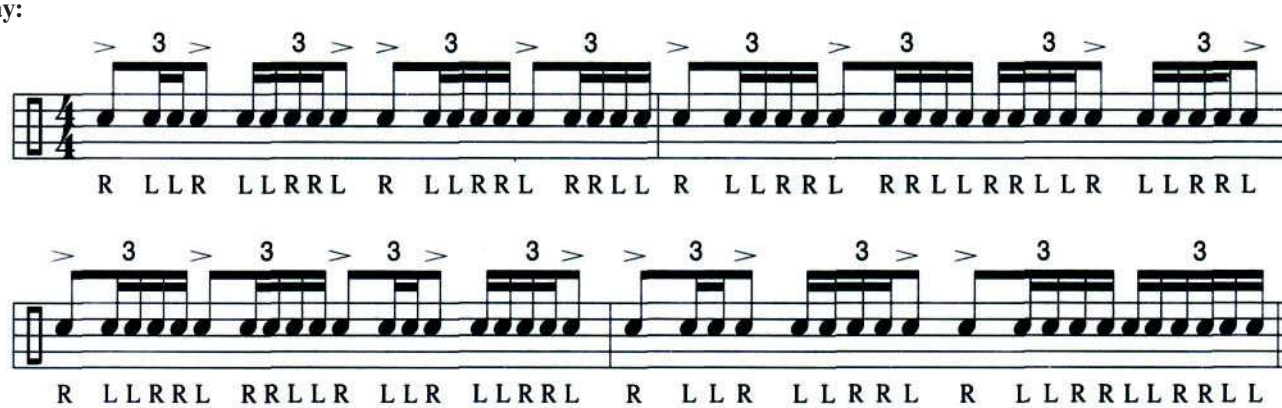
With the rolled exercises, try playing the rhythmic song with both open and closed rolls. It's a good practice to exaggerate the rolls, playing the song with rolls as open and then as closed as possible, always concentrating on the accuracy of the accents. You will notice almost immediately how the rolled exercises build on the muscles of the hand.

Alternating 8th-Note-Triplet Variation Rolled

Using alternating 8th-note triplets, roll only those notes that are unaccented. The accented song notes will appear just as they did in the alternating-triplet variation. Again, the feel of the song should be completely different from the alternating-16th-note variation rolled.

Read:

Play:



It is also helpful, especially with the rolled exercises, to think of the two volume levels as played with two different stroke types. The accents should be played with a strong wrist stroke, while the rolls or background notes are played with less powerful finger strokes. Assigning separate stroke types to the two volume levels should automatically make the accents speak out from the bed of background notes.

Next time we'll explore other ways to apply this concept.

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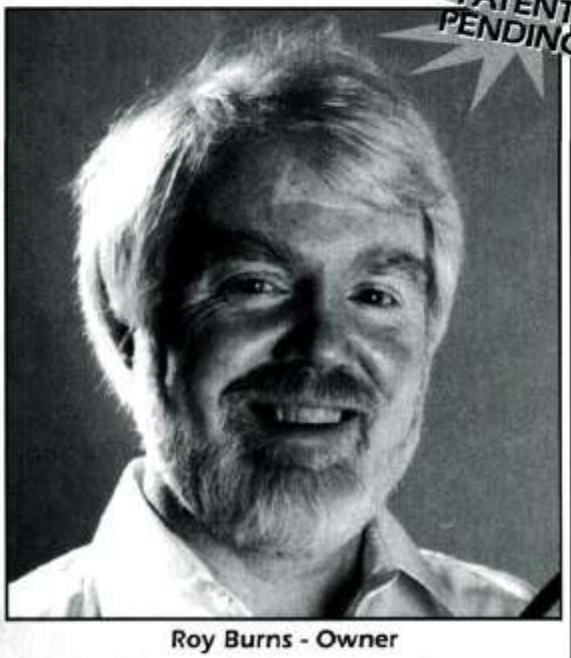

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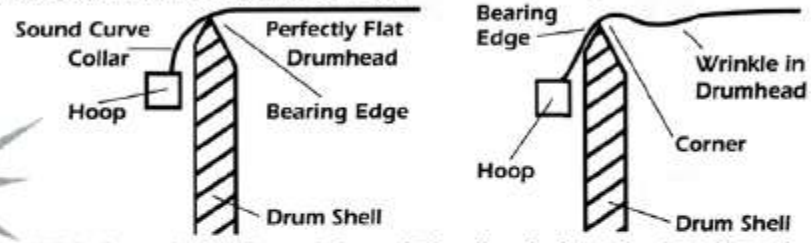

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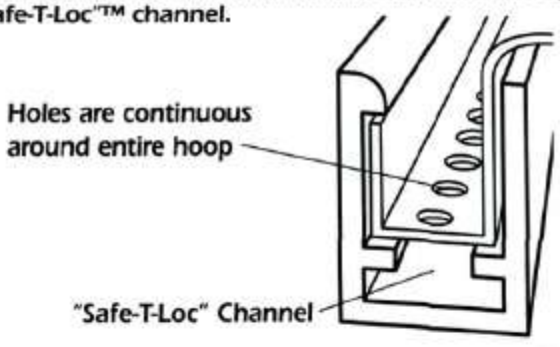

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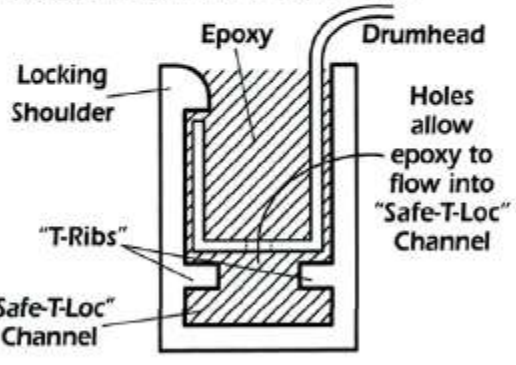

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The Drummer's Studio Survival Guide: Part 6
Room Acoustics

by Mark Parsons

Even though the study of acoustics is a science, the definition of a "good room" is still largely subjective. A "good room" is simply one that works for the type of recording you wish to make. The trick is in identifying such a room *prior* to investing your time and money. And to complicate matters even further, I'll go so far as to say that a good recording *can* be made in almost any room, if need be.

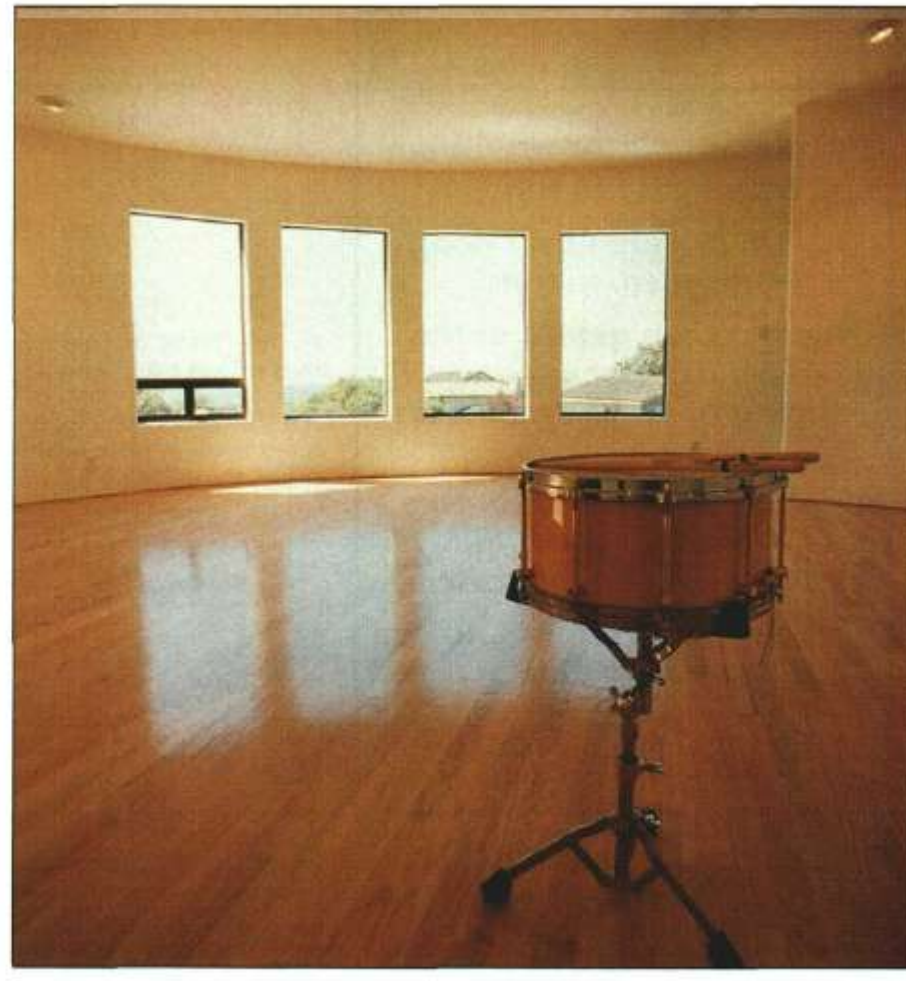
That said, this article should be over, right? Not so fast. Isn't it also true that if need be, good music can be made on any drumset? It sure is, but that doesn't mean that we don't care about the quality of our drums, or what kind of heads we use, or how they're tuned. The proper instrument makes it easier for us to fully realize our musical vision, sounds more musical to both us and the listener, is a joy to play on, and may even inspire us to greater creativity. Well, all of the above also applies to the proper room, for one simple reason: Drums are an acoustic instrument, and *the room is part of the instrument.*

It's true. Unless you're playing in an anechoic chamber or outside on a completely sound-absorbing stage with no structures nearby, a good part of your drum sound—for better or worse—is a product of the room you're in. To get an approximation of just how true this is, take your snare out to the middle of a large grassy area away from any buildings (the top of a small hill is best) and play it. Even better (though a bit more cumbersome) is to bring your kick drum: You'll be amazed at how incredibly thin and dry it sounds. Well, the difference between this papery little sound and the full sound you're used to hearing from your drum is strictly due to the absence of any *reflected sound,* which is usually a prominent component of a drum's overall sound. What's left is the *direct sound,* and it's anemic condition tells us just how important the room's contribution really is.

As we'll see, the room acts as both an equalizer *and* a reverb. From previous installments of this series (#2 and #3, respectively) we learned that EQ can change the perceived depth of a drum by accentuating or reducing either fundamentals or harmonics, while reverb adds ambience, varying the apparent size and liveliness of the sound. The wrong room can fight your enhancements every step of the way, making it difficult to achieve your desired sound, but the right room will work with you, sometimes to the point where you can just about put up the mic's and play. How do rooms acquire their different sonic personalities? Let's peek inside the soundwaves for a minute and see.

Physics

Surfaces respond to soundwaves by either *reflecting, diffusing,* or *absorbing* them (or some combination of these), depending on the nature of the surface in question. Hard, flat surfaces will reflect sound in the same way a mirror or piece of

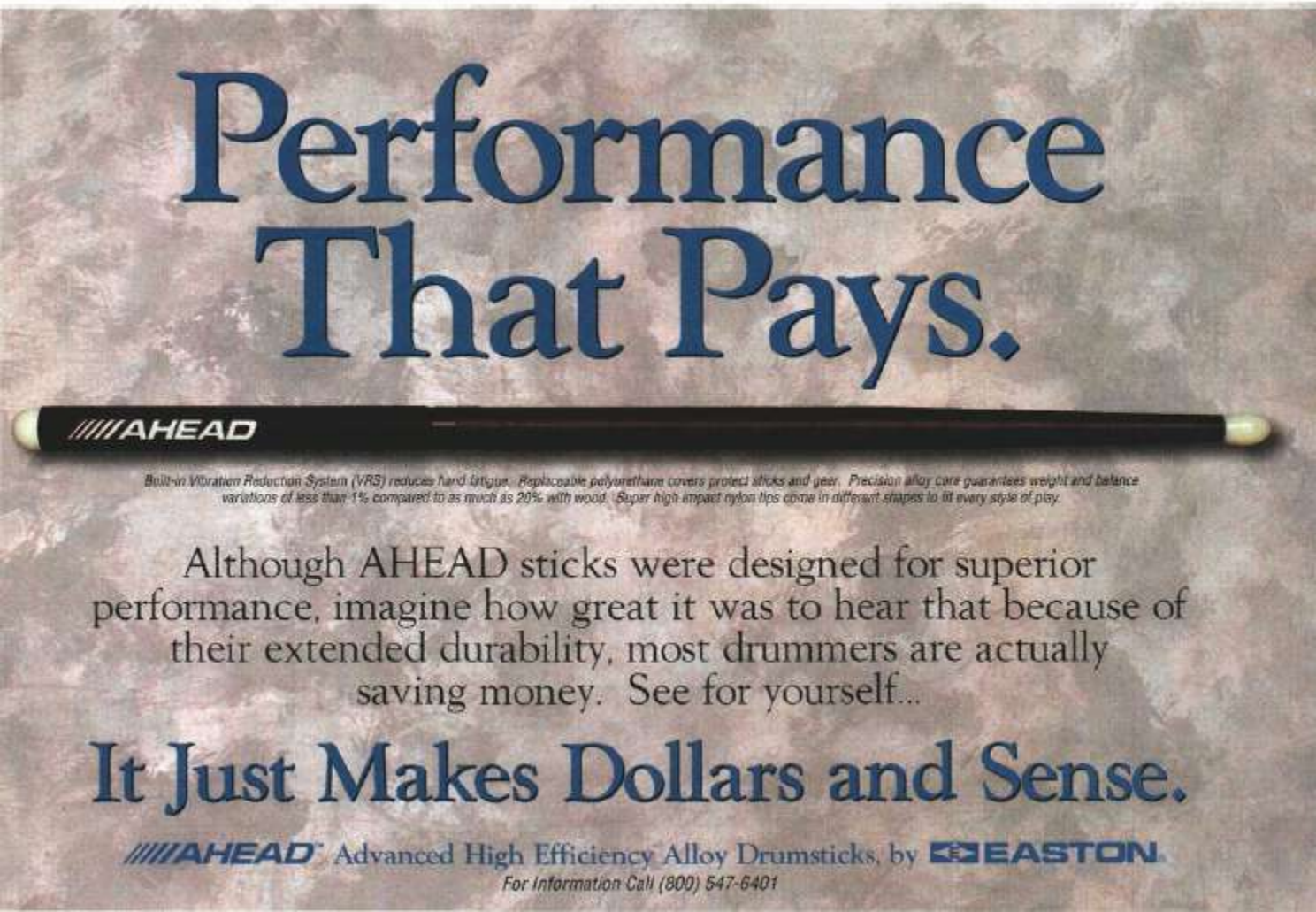


polished marble will reflect light. Surfaces with many different planes and angles will diffuse the sound, much like a wrinkled piece of aluminum foil will diffuse light shined upon it. (The light will still be reflected, but the reflections will be jumbled up in different directions rather than the coherent reflections you get from a mirror.) Soft, porous surfaces—especially those with depth, like corrugated foam—will absorb and dissipate sound the way black velvet will absorb light.

It should be noted that these descriptions are more applicable to the mid and high frequencies than to low frequencies, which behave differently due to their extremely long wavelengths. Because of this, a room can be "tuned" by the addition of various materials to bring the high end in line with the low end, which is more a factor of the geometry and construction of the room itself than surface coverings. One of the adverse factors affecting low end is the presence of *resonant frequencies.* These occur when two or more dimensions of a room are the same or multiples of each other. When this happens, a frequency that has a wavelength equal to the common room dimension gets boosted by the room, resulting in a (usually) unwanted peak in the frequency response. For example, a room that's 20'x20' with a 10' ceiling will have a resonant frequency of around 55 Hz, which will cause the room to "boom" every time your bass player hits his low A. Far better would be a room that was, say, 17'x25' with the same 10' ceiling. That room's fundamental frequencies would be staggered (44 Hz, 65 Hz, and 110 Hz) for a smoother low end.

Another possible adverse condition is the presence *of flutter echoes.* These can happen when parallel reflective surfaces (for example, hard walls) face each other across the room. What happens is that sounds bounce back and forth between the walls, creating a rapid series of short echoes that decay away, sounding "fluttery." Flutter echoes are more noticeable with short, percussive sounds, hence they're particularly heinous to drummers. A similar problem is the *slapback* echo, caused by sound coming back from a single hard surface (usually the far wall) resulting in a single echo reminiscent of the sound on old rockabilly recordings. A quick check for these problems is to stand between the walls and clap your hands, listening for their characteristic sounds.

Besides having a certain timbre (brighter or darker, depending on which frequencies the room accentuates or absorbs), rooms also have a quantity of overall reverberation known as the "RT-60." As explained in the earlier article on digital effects, RT-60 is basically how long it takes a reverb to decay to the point of inaudibility. (Although usually measured irrespective of frequency content, a brighter room will *seem* more ambient than a darker room even though the two may have identical RT-60s.) The easiest way to determine a



room's decay time is to make short sounds (clap your hands or hit a damped snare) and listen for how long the sound seems to hang in the air.

That's enough theory for now. Let's get down to some practical realities.

Ambience Considerations

The first step when looking for a room is to take a minute and think about the type of sound you're looking for. (Remember the first commandment of recording drums, way back in Part 1 of this series? *Define thy vision.)* Are you in a metal group looking for that huge, ambient, "drums from hell" sound? Or perhaps you're doing a jazz quartet and you plan on using overheads for your primary mic's to get an authentic acoustic sound, and you want a more moderate, controlled ambience.

Regardless of the type of music you play, keep in mind that unless you're going to use *only* distant room mic's to record your drums (rarely done), the sound on tape won't be as ambient as the actual sound in the room, because the room mic's will be blended (at a relatively low level) with other, closer mic's. This means we're at least as concerned with the *quality* of the ambience as the exact *quantity* of it. If a room sounds nice to you but you think it might be a little too lively, you can pull down the room mic's a little in the mix. You'll still get the ambient quality that drew you to the room in the first place, but at a level that fits your music. On the other hand, if the room is too dry, about all you can do is add effects (like digital reverb), which, as good as they've gotten lately, are still not exactly the same as the real acoustic ambience you get from a great-sounding room.

So what physical conditions are we looking for in a room, to get the sound we want? Not knowing what sound you're looking for, I can't describe *your* perfect room, but I can give you some preferences as guidelines, from which we can draw some general conclusions. (Remember, a lot of this is a matter of personal taste!)

My ideal room would be a non-square structure (either a rectangle or a trapezoid). The exact size isn't as important as the shape and surface coverings, but we want to be comfortable—so we'll say a minimum of 500 square feet (though great drum sounds have been recorded in smaller rooms). The ceiling would be of at least moderate height—10' or more—and the floor would be hardwood with some carpeted areas (or better yet, movable area rugs for flexibility). The walls would be a mix of wood, plaster, glass, and diffusion materials, and as long as we're at it, let's have a nice quiet ventilation/air conditioning system and good lighting. One more thing: *No* sound should leak in from outside.

Conversely, my nightmare room would be a square room with an 8' ceiling, sheetrock on all four walls, wall-to-wall carpet, poor ventilation and lighting, and so

little insulation that whenever a truck goes by you have to re-do the take. (You may notice an acute resemblance between this description and your basic remodeled garage....)

In general, we're looking for a variety of surfaces so that no one frequency gets singled out for overemphasis. A lively room is fine (within reason), as long as the reflections are spread out fairly evenly over the sound spectrum and there are no obvious acoustic flaws (like room boom, flutters, or lack of isolation from the outside world). A higher ceiling will add "air" and, just as importantly, keep you from feeling cramped or confined. A low ceiling can sound harsh and splattery because the cymbals don't have room to develop before they reflect back down into the room.

Don't forget creature comforts, either. It's hard to be at your creative best when it's 85° and stuffy in the studio, or when the lighting's so bad you can't read your chart. You're going to be there for a while, so pick a room you can live with. Above all, a good room is one that inspires you to be creative.

We talked to Kenny Aronoff about rooms, and he discussed the concept of "playing for the room." He said his preferences are shifting from a big room sound to a somewhat more controlled ambience for most situations. "If the room is *too* big," says Kenny, "the drums start to lose a little definition. With a big ambient room, if you have a lot of musicians, the room sound takes up a lot of space on the tape. I'd rather have a medium-size room with the sound somewhat controlled. If it's a power trio, that's different. If you're using a big room you want to have space in the music and on the tape for it to be heard. Otherwise, it starts to clutter up everything.

"Each room has a personality—some are warmer, some are brighter, some are more ambient. I'm finding myself trying to play for the room a little bit more. There's a point where you can *overplay* the room—you play too hard and oversaturate the room, and your drums don't sound as good. You have to try to fill the room up just perfectly. I don't know the actual specifics on this, so I'll ask the engineer to tell me if I'm overplaying the room."

In The Room

Once you've picked a room, where should you set up? Don't assume that just because every other drummer sets up in a certain area that you have to, too. The "standard spot" may have been picked more for convenience than acoustics, or you may just prefer a different sound than everyone else. Try different areas. Walk around hitting a snare and listening to the room until you find a spot you like.

Also consider the nature of the floor under your kit. It has a significant effect on your sound because it's the surface closest to your drums. It's good to experiment here, too. My studio has a raised 8'x12' area with a wood floor for drums. A drum-

Under The Influence.

When it comes to drumming, you may have noticed that the most influential players are always the ones who draw from the most influences. You know, different strokes from different folks. So why limit your listening to only a few kinds of "good" music when there's so many great ones around? According to power/punk/funk/rock drummer Chad Smith, developing your own style comes from constantly exposing yourself to other styles. "Steal from everybody," Chad says, "then make it your own. And who knows, one day other drummers may find themselves under your influence."

DRUMMING
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mer can either set up directly on the wood, place a small rag down first to help anchor the drums, or cover the entire platform with a carpet prior to setting up. Each of the three configurations yields a different sound. (I once recorded at a studio in L.A. where they had a big piece of polished *sheet metal* set into the floor for the drums. Talk about bright reflections!)

The main point is to be creative. Consider using spaces in the studio not normally used for tracking drums: the foyer, a hallway, a restroom, or even the control room. (Good luck talking the engineer into *that* one.) If the studio's attached to a house, other possibilities open up. For example, the tile bathroom down the hall might be just the thing for that timbale part you're planning to overdub.

Troubleshooting

Occasionally you'll run into a problem with the acoustics of your recording environment. While you can't remodel the room overnight, there are a few things you can do to improve the situation.

If the room is too live, curtains over some of the walls (especially glass or plaster areas) will cut down on high frequency reflections, as will rugs on hard floors. The addition of furniture (or people, for that matter) will break up reflections, and moving heavy, padded furniture (sofas, overstuffed chairs, etc.) out from the walls a foot or two will form a "bass trap" and help soak up some excess low end.

A dead room, on the other hand, benefits from the *addition* of hard surfaces. Vinnie Appice mentioned in *MD* several years ago leaning sheets of plywood together to construct a small reflective "tent" around his kit in an otherwise dead room. Other options would be to set up next to any reflective surfaces in the studio (such as large windows, mirrors, or sliding glass doors) in an effort to increase reflections. Also remove any rugs, curtains, or diffusion panels from the area if possible, as well as any heavy furniture.

Discreet echoes (flutters or a hard slapback) benefit from the same sort of treatment we applied to a live room. Your efforts should be focused on the two parallel surfaces (for flutters) or the far wall (for slapbacks).

If you're experiencing too much bleed (not enough isolation between instruments) you can place gobos (small sound-deadening panels) between instruments, if available. Otherwise you can use heavy packing blankets hung over mic' booms to help isolate guitar amps from drums, etc. If the situation becomes intolerable, you may wish to consider overdubbing each instrument individually. (We'll discuss multitrack recording in detail next month.)

In a worse-case scenario you may find yourself recording in a room with *horrible* acoustics. (Maybe it's your brother-in-law's studio and he's giving you free time?) In any case, don't give up. Remember our credo: *We can record anywhere.* In this instance what we want to do is take pains to *eliminate* as much of the room sound from the mix as possible. Use no ambient mic's. Pull the overheads down close to the cymbals to reduce the room sound and roll off the low end on them to further isolate the cymbals. Mike each individual drum as closely as possible to avoid any of the offensive room sound leaking into your tracks. (If you really want to get aggressive about this, use noise gates. See last month's installment for details.) Use a good digital reverb to add ambience back to your tracks during the mix, and there you have it—good (if not great) drum tracks from a bad room.

I'd like to leave you with this thought: The most important thing about a good room sound—even beyond making your tracks sound good on tape—is that, just like a good drumset, it makes *you feel good* when you play. That will do more for your music than any piece of technology. *Happy drumming!*

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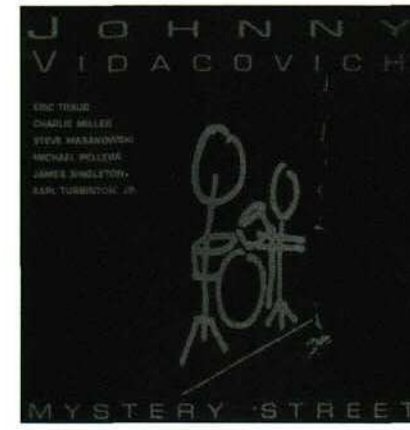
RECORDINGS

JOHNNY VIDACOVICH

Mystery Street
(JAMB Music)



Johnny Vidacovich: dr
Michael Pellera: pno
Steve Masakowski: gtr
James Singleton: bs
Eric Traub: tn sx
Charlie Miller: trp, flghn
Earl Turbington: al sx

If you're lucky like the locals, maybe you'll catch him in the French Quarter's close-quartered clubs or while standing shoulder-to-shoulder at the legendary Tipitina's. Or maybe you've heard him with high-profile acts like John Scofield, Mose Allison, or Professor Longhair. If you've missed out, Johnny Vidacovich's first solo disc shows why he's one of New Orleans' most sought-after drummers.

A spirited individualist who combines New Orleans R&B, jazz, and funk with fire and good humor, Vidacovich brings the rhythmic traditions of his homeland into the '90s. He lets it rip as if every cut is a live date peak. You can just feel him stirring the place up, egging the band on. On tunes like "New Orleans Mambo" and the title track, he puts his second-line snare street beats to work, making funky fun with a winding, ever-shifting urgency. In his able hands, the notey, linear patterns bolster the band rather than obscure it. Johnny is uninterested in ho-hum slick studio syndrome; for all his control and subtlety, he still succeeds in sounding rowdy. *(JAMB Music, P.O. Box 6141, Diamondhead, MS 39525-6141)*

•Jeff Potter

PETER ERSKINE

History Of The Drum
(Interworld CD-917)

Peter Erskine: dr, perc, kybd
Roscoe Lee Browne: narrator
Will Lee: bs

Peter Erskine exemplifies the modern drummer perhaps better than anyone else. Performing virtually every style of Western music with authenticity, stylish chops, and wry humor, Peter is equally comfortable as a composer, writer, and visionary.

This "admittedly quite subjective and personal" *History,* commissioned originally for the Kokuma Dance Company of Birmingham, England, traverses time and space with a happy disregard for the didactic implications of its title. Africans dance in New Orleans, balaphons find their way to Jamaica, claves color the streets of Calcutta, and the sampled voices of Papa Jo Jones and Louis Armstrong mingle with drum machines, synthesizers, and acoustic polyrhythms, all unified by Peter's familiar and accessible triadic themes and harmonies.

If the visual dimension of dance is palpably absent, and if, as Peter acknowledges, natural selection necessarily passed over the drumming traditions of this country or that era, the listener should not be disappointed. Just as Stan Kenton fans might have shunned Weather Report, and those who venerate Steely Dan might lack the patience for Peter's quietly beautiful albums on ECM, this drummer wears his many colors without apology. *(Interworld Music, RD3 Box 395A, Brattleboro, VT 05301)*

• Hal Howland

ROY HAYNES

Te Vou!
(Dreyfus FDM 36569-2)

Roy Haynes: dr
Donald Harrison: al sx
Pat Metheny: gtr
David Kikoski: pno
Christian McBride: bs

Like Chopin's etudes, the miniature but brilliant advents that fill all of Roy Haynes' albums signature him as a master instrumentalist. On the opener on this studio recording, Chick Corea's "Like This," Haynes begins with a playful fill that captures the energy of the tune, then sits back and plays time in ways that remind you of Weckl or Colaiuta. But this drummer is twice their age and has played with some of the greatest names in jazz: Parker, Coltrane, Corea, Metheny.

Metheny contributes four tunes and some inspiring solos here, but he is not the star of this session—it's Roy's, all the way. And though David Kikoski and Donald Harrison add some stellar notes of their own, Haynes' boundless energy consistently leaps from the drumset to propel them further. To Roy—TeVou!

• Adam Ward Seligman

DEATH

Symbolic
(Roadrunner RR 8957-2)

Gene Hoglan: dr, perc
Chuck Schuldiner: gtr, vcl
Kelly Conlon: bs
Bobby Koeble: gtr

Gene Hoglan proves that any musician, no matter what style of music he or she plays, is only limited by imagination. Strictly in the compositional sense, Death isn't putting anything new on tape with *Symbolic.* But Hoglan takes such an unconventional approach to method and execu-

tion that he almost single-handedly lifts death—both the band and the genre—to new plateaus.

The opening title cut is an unbridled Hoglan showcase. Along with the requisite mile-a-minute double-kick work, he uses a flurry of double-stroke rolls on dual ride cymbals for seemingly impossible patterns. And as the song toggles its way between blast-beat speed and relative molasses, Hoglan locks the band in a deceptively comfortable groove.

Though he might have the fastest pair of kick feet on the planet, Hoglan's real forte is his ability to keep his parts seamless, tight, and ultimately musical—no easy task, as he plays everything from mounted boat propellers to missile casings. That, combined with Schuldiner's brutal voice, make for a killer disc and an essential addition to anybody's library of Death—or death.

• Matt Peiken

KALANI

Pangea
(Interworld Music RBOKM010)

Kalani: perc, voice
Bernie Dresel: dr
Tom Miller: steel pans
other musicians

One of the great things about the record-buying public in the '90s is its general openness to new artists not signed to giant record labels. The debut CD by Kalani is a great example of some of the creative and entertaining music that's being given wider exposure these days.

Knowing Kalani as the nimble percussionist formerly with Yanni's touring band, one might expect a CD of percussion-oriented music. Thankfully, the compositions here stand out as much as Kalani's fine playing. Catchy melodies, different styles, and lyrics in Portuguese make the music flow from track to track. And Kalani does a fine job of playing a plethora of instruments, from general percussion to marimba and vibes, as do Bernie Dresel and Tom Miller, who respectively handle drumset and steel pan duties. Despite all of these percussive sounds, one never gets the feeling that a percussion part or instrument was forced on a track; all sounds are always complementary to the music.

One additional bonus here is that the individual instruments Kalani plays on each track are listed, which can help less-experienced players learn the sounds that can be produced. It seems as if Kalani has put the music first here, rather than flashy playing. Great concept! *(Interworld Music, RD3 Box 395A, Brattleboro, VT 05301)*

• George Sandier

TIM BERNE

Lowlife
(JMT 697 124 054-2)
Poisoned Minds
(JMT 697 124 055-2)

Tim Berne: al, bar sx
Jim Black: dr
Chris Speed: tn sx, cl
Michael Formanek: bs
Marc Ducret: gtr

Formed in 1993, Tim Berne's group Bloodcount performs independently not only of the inadequate P.A. systems Berne encountered in former bands, but also of the traditional theme-and-variations approach to jazz. This pair of discs, recorded live last fall at Instants Chavires in Paris, pursues these twin objectives to good advantage.

Bloodcount's collective, circular structures give the lasting impression of wholeness: Written and improvised sections grow from one another as organically as guitars melt into saxophones and arco basses into softly rolling cymbals; unusual duos and trios step outside just long enough to reveal the full ensemble as one big instrument. Jim Black charges the chamber-like atmosphere with virtuosity, seamless beater changes (making model use of brushes and hands), panoramic tone colors, ferocious climaxes, and a most beautifully tuned bass drum.

•Hal Howland

STEVE BERRIOS AND SON PACHECHE

First World
(Milestone MCD-9234-2)

Steve Berrios: dr, perc, trp
Pedro Morejon, Freddy Cole, Julito Collazo, Eddie Bobe: vcl
Larry Willis: pno
John Benitez, George Mraz: bs
Joe Ford, Peter Brainin, Grover Washington Jr.: sx

A *major* drummer/percussionist/all-around musician who hasn't yet basked in his deserved share of glory, Berrios has finally graced us with a solo disc. In his formative two decades playing drums and percussion with Mongo Santamaria, Berrios was a

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

The enormously funky **ZIGABOO MODELISTE** of the Meters is all over Rhino's recent two-CD compilation, *Funkify Your Life.* Purchase immediately. **AL FOSTER** lends an innovative spin to Chris Potter's *Pure* (Concord Jazz) and cooks on the straight-ahead self-titled album by the News, featuring George Mraz, Kirk Lightsey, and Tony Lakotas (Jazzline). Suddenly, Tammy! is a truly "alternative" piano/bass/drums trio whose *(We Get There When We Do.)* (Warner Bros.) is propelled by the tasteful and solid **JAY SORRENTINO.** Ex-Descendents/Black Flag drummer **BILL** STEVENSON tears through All's *Pummel* (Interscope), while **STEPHEN KRETSINGER** dynamically leads Shallow into some *3-D Stereo Trouble* (Zero Hour).

RATING SCALE

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

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leader in adapting Latin percussion section rhythms to drumset. Since then he has backed numerous important jazz and Latin figures and has continued his pan-cultural rhythmic pursuits as a member of the Fort Apache Band. And what honor could say more than Max Roach's invitation in '91 to join his prestigious percussion fraternity, M'Boom?

While some artists heap synths and fusion/funk grooves on Latin-influenced jazz with the intent of staking a claim to the cutting edge, Berrios' acoustic music is ultimately more contemporary in its unselfconscious disregard for the "barriers" between what defines jazz, Latin, or folkloric. Berrios has *internalized* these traditions, and his melting pot results artfully avoid contrivance.

From easy melodic swinging and Afro-Cuban explorations to multi-percussion solo interludes and an eerily plaintive overlapping of old Yoruban chant with Ornette's "Lonely Woman," Berrios channels diverse bloodlines into one beating heart.

•*Jeff Potter*

VIDEOS

ELVIN JONES JAZZ MACHINE

(View Video Jazz Series)
$19.98,58 minutes

Elvin Jones: dr
Sonny Fortune: tn sx, fl
Ravi Coltrane: tn sx, sp sx
Chip Jackson: bs

Recorded at Stuttgart's Theatre Haus in 1991, Elvin Jones' long-standing quartet appears here playing a mere three selections in the space of an hour. But even in this relatively short span of time, Elvin & Co. prove that straight-ahead, breezy-tempoed jazz can be as ferocious as any high-velocity avant-garde or ear-shattering heavy metal.

Opening with "Is There A Jackson In The House?" Elvin bashes time on the hi-hats, segueing into a New Orleans-ish blues, with each member taking a solo and Elvin giving the final commentary. This recipe is followed for Thad Jones' medium-tempo cosmopolitan-sounding "Ray El" and "Doll Of The Bride," a rearranged Japanese folk song that features Elvin playing a Latin pattern between cymbal bell and toms.

Sadly, the amateurish, at times moronic camerawork is immensely frustrating. When we are treated to a rare close-up of Elvin's hands, the frame is mercilessly short in duration. Likewise, when Elvin is playing an interesting pattern or one of his incredible full-set triplet rolls, the camera is often focused elsewhere. Though there are a number of close-ups of Elvin's sweaty noggin, when you're watching a living, breathing master with the immense life-force of Elvin Jones, distractions like these are a particular nuisance.

Despite the visual problems with this video, though, the music here is wonderful and the audio is perfectly satisfactory, making this a recommended, if less than perfect, representation of the art of Elvin Jones. *(V.I.E.W., 34 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010)*

• *Ken Micallef*

BOOKS

ROB SILVERMAN

Drumset: 101—An Overview Of Drumset Styles
(Hoe's Publishing)
$14.95

Rob Silverman's *Overview* was apparently conducted from quite a height, evidenced by its considerable breadth and, in a couple of areas, targets broadly missed. From its cursory look at the forty PAS rudiments to its sampling of one-bar club date patterns (polka, tango, bolero, Arabic, and Greek dance beats) *101* does cover a lot of real estate. Much cooler sections on rock, funk, songo, and samba/Mozambique are granted more space and generally provide a decent start for beginners. The mix is curious, though, with more than a hundred rock beats and two pages of double bass fills, but only one reggae beat and two mambos.

Weighing in at a scant forty-four pages (six of which are blank staffs for "Teacher's Notes" or lists of books and recordings for further study) *101* shortchanges certain musical subtleties, and overlooks others entirely. While accents are indicated in many of the funk, hip-hop, and shuffle beats, they all but disappear in sections on odd meters, Latin, and swing. And in one of the book's few attempts to correlate the various styles and skills, the student is directed to apply the same (and only!) pulse-heavy triplet fills to shuffle, hip-hop, and swing, with no effort to explain or contrast the distinct feel of those idioms, forfeiting in particular the reader's understanding of swing's defining characteristic.

The generalist approach to beginners' drum books has great potential for broadening perspectives and linking common concepts across musical contexts. *Drumset: 101* succeeds in the former goal and largely skirts the latter. More critically, while its admirably wide scope may whet young musical appetites, its superficiality precludes attention to details essential to even a basic understanding of some of the styles it purports to introduce. *(Hoe's Publishing, P.O. Box 28705, St. Louis, MO 63146-1205, (314) 997-6435.)*

• *Rich Watson*

LATIN GROOVES

by Dave Hassell
(Hassell-Free Press)
$23 **plus shipping and handling (book and cassette)**

Hassell's self-published package works well as a review/practice tool, allowing students to run down grooves with a tape featuring generously long loops of piano, bass, and percussion. The "Key Page" catalogs basic examples of each groove to be played with the tape.

By running down grooves back-to-back, the drummer gains better insight into the subtle differences that characterize Latin styles. The bulk of the book examines variations within each of these grooves along with brief interpretive suggestions. Grooves covered include mambo, cha-cha, guaracha, Mozambique, songo, pachanga, rumba, Afro-Cuban 6/8, calypso, and the lively style known to every Caribbean party-goer, soca (soul calypso), which has rarely been covered in drum books.

Because there is little explanatory text and the "music minus one" format offers no recorded examples of how the drumset patterns should sound or feel, this is not a suggested buy for Latin music newcomers (unless a teacher is guiding). Those students should first seek out the marvelous *Afro-Cuban Rhythms For The Drum Set* by Bob Weiner and Frank Malabe. But for those who are prepared to test drive these patterns, Hassell's convenient groove cataloging and to-the-point audio tracks are great fun for extended "locking up" workouts. *(Hassell-Free Press, 22 Park Road, Timperley, Altrincham WA14 5AU, England)*

•*Jeff Potter*

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Paul Bostaph On...

by Ken Micallef

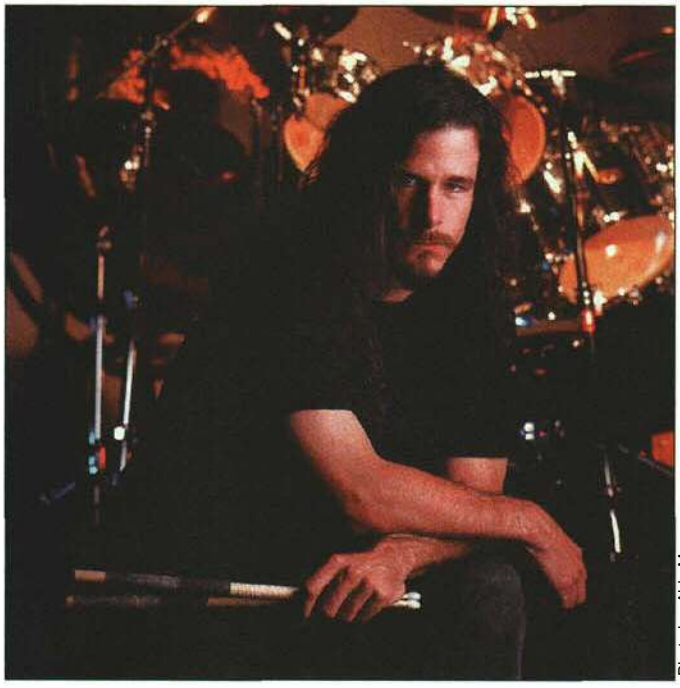

Photo by Aldo Mauro

Paul Bostaph has more than made his mark since replacing Dave Lombardo with death metal maestros Slayer. "Ifeel I've had a lot to prove, " he says, "that I'm not just somebody who's come along for the ride. I've come to help push." *Relaxing between two sold-out shows in New York, Bostaph welcomed a bout with* Impressions. *Careful to be even-handed and fair with his criticism, Bostaph nonetheless appeared nonplused over Pantera—but almost jumped out of his chair when the first notes of Deep Purple's "Burn" blasted through the boombox speakers. A player with knowledge of varying styles of music, Bostaph's unusual listening habits reside outside of metal's closely kept boundaries. "I go back to the past," he says. "Anything from Thin Lizzy, UFO, Earth, Wind & Fire, and the Eagles to Al Jarreau and Glenn Miller. I hear enough modern music from the radio and through my friends. I play heavy stuff all the time, so I don't need that fix. "*

...Tim "Herb" Alexander

Laundry: "Hole" (from *Blacktongue)*

Alexander: dr; Ian Varriale: stick; Tom Butler: gtr; Toby Hawkins: vcl

PB: Pretty interesting. The overlying melody in the verse reminded me of the Seattle sound. Other than that, what was going on was really cool and innovative. I liked the ghost-note stuff the drummer was doing on the snare during the verses; he filled in all the tom-tom patterns really nicely with that. It wasn't prevalent in the mix, though, and as a drummer I'd like to hear more of it. I also liked the final bridge they used—a really unusual, progressive pattern. It gave the drummer some space to play.

KM: It's Herb Alexander from Primus on Laundry's album.

PB: I was going to ask you if this was a Primus derivative, 'cause I recognized some of Herb's fills. Primus are too influential for me to listen to as a band, 'cause I'm a sponge. But I thought I heard his sound.

...Dave Lombardo

Grip Inc.: "Torque De Muerto"/"Colors Of Death" (from *Power Of Inner Strength)*

Lombardo: dr; Gus Chambers: vcl; Waldemar Sorychta: gtr, vcl; Jason Viebrooks: bs

PB: That was something I've always wanted to do: Go in the studio and play against myself. I'd be stuck in there a long time having fun. I admire anybody who can do that. That beginning piece was great. The rest of it was highly energetic. The fact that they're exploring all these different realms took me by surprise. I anticipated it flowing into a more mellow piece, but it busted into this heavy thing. And they should turn up that fast drum fill.

KM: It's Grip Inc. with Dave Lombardo.

PB: Turn Dave up! I applaud you Dave, very cool. I really liked the percussion section.

KM: Why are most heavy metal bands unwilling to experiment with percussion or other musical styles?

PB: Too often, heavy metal fans only want to hear one kind of music. It's like only eating one kind of food. If you put vegetables on their plate, they're not too hip to it. Experimental music—like new vegetables—is an acquired taste. If you get too far out then you'll have a smaller audience. But as far as I'm concerned, it either rocks or it doesn't. How much it keeps your head banging is what matters.

...Vinnie Paul

Pantera: "Use My Third Arm" (from *Far Beyond Driven)*

Paul: dr; Dimebag Darrell: gtr; Philip Anselmo: vcl; Rex: bs

PB: This is Pantera. There are only a couple of things I can say about these guys. They're a hell of a band, they're solid players, and they write good songs. Vinnie has all kinds of strengths. He's a very creative drummer with his parts. And he does good work. That recording sound is good for them; that's exclusively the Pantera sound. Very "in-your-face," almost industrial. They get that meat grinder sound.

...Ian Paice

Deep Purple: "Burn" (from *Burn)*

Paice: dr; Ritchie Blackmore: gtr; David Coverdale: vcl; Glenn Hughes: bs, vcl; Jon Lord: kybd

PB: That's Ian Paice with Deep Purple. I love Ian Paice. This song is so bad-ass. The guys in Slayer are talking about covering this tune. The drum fills during the verses of this song are great! To

reproduce this I would want to do it as close to what Ian played as I possibly could. I'm a really big fan of Deep Purple—and Rainbow and Whitesnake too, for that matter. The only part I hate in "Burn" is the vocal in the bridge—that lousy note. But it's just a tiny part of the song. These guys are great. *Machine Head* and *Space Truckin'* are excellent. I bow and worship to that song.

...Marvin "Smitty" Smith

Kevin Eubanks: "Like The Wind" (from *Spirit Talk)*
Smith: dr; Eubanks: gtr; Kent Jordan: fl; Robin Eubanks: tb; Dave Holland: bs

PB: That's not Metheny, is it? The drumming was very over the top. Even during the guitar solo the guy was going off all the time. I was thinking, "Give the guitar player a little room there, pal." Sometimes the drums worked against what was happening, only because I was trying to hear *everything* that was happening. So it was really over the top, but cool—and in a very interesting time signature. I'm not familiar with this drummer's work, but I appreciate what he's doing—just going for it. Some of the parts were very loose and inspired—a big barrage of things happening.

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Subbing In A Big Band

by Steve Snodgrass

One of my greatest drumming pleasures is playing in a modern big band. Driving fifteen or so other musicians through everything from ballads to bossa novas to rock 'n' roll is a truly invigorating experience. To me, it's like a cross between playing in a Top-40 trio and conducting a symphony orchestra.

One of the most delightful aspects of this experience is that it can be had with little or no rehearsal; some of my favorite gigs have been as a sub drummer in a big band I've never played with before! This is no accident, and it's certainly not because of any extraordinary talent on my part. It happens because I am prepared and I do specific things before, during, and after the gig.

Sharing this approach is the purpose of this article, and I hope you will find it useful should you decide to get into this area of drumming. If you already are a big band drummer, some of the suggestions listed here might even help you to enjoy yourself more on the job by making it go a little smoother.

Minimum Requirements

Back to you beginners. Before you start calling big bands to announce your availability, make sure you have at least the minimal musical qualifications. It is imperative that you be able to play comfortably in many different styles, including swing, rock/pop, shuffle, polka, and Latin. In this last broad category, bossa nova and samba are essential, but familiarity with other common Latin dance rhythms like tango, rumba, and cha-cha is highly recommended. You don't have to be an expert on any of these, just able to play them simply and make them feel good.

It is also *imperative* that you know how to read. While some of the tunes in a big band set may allow or require the drummer to play by ear, most of the time there are specific charts. If you're not able to read and follow the starts, stops, kicks, and other changes for a tune, the best that can happen is a mediocre, less-than-confident-sounding performance. The worst that can happen is a total train wreck (with some very annoyed musicians). Remember that behind the drumset you are the driver, so you've got to know where you're going. On occasion your "drum" chart for a tune may be nothing more than a copy of the first trumpet part, or sometimes the piano or bass part. While the latter two can provide you with useful style information, the trumpet part will help you set up brass kicks more effectively. Either way, you'll at least have an accurate road map for the piece, and that's more than half the battle.

"If you do your homework, plan ahead, and play your best, it's almost hard *not* to have a successful big band gig. With the right attitude and effort, you might be amazed at how many of them turn out to be really great ones."

While we're on the subject of musical preparedness, you should know that there are generally two kinds of big bands: the "dance" band, and what I call the "hot" band. As the name suggests, the former focuses on music to which its audience can dance (thus the importance of knowing the traditional "society" styles mentioned earlier). The latter is more of a concert ensemble, with an emphasis on jazz and more contemporary, sophisticated compositions. The hot band is usually much more demanding in terms of reading skills and chops, often featuring up-tempos and frequent soloing, so be ready if you sit in with one of these groups! Sometimes hot bands will do dance gigs, so don't automatically rale out playing with them if you're not a "hot" player. Just ascertain the nature of the job beforehand and make sure you're up to it.

If you need to improve your skills, I recommend Steve Houghton's video *The Drummer's Guide To Reading Drum Charts* (CPP Media VH0177) and his book *Studio & Big Band Drumming* (C.L. Barnhouse 070-1990-44)—both excellent resources for the big band novice. And until you feel confident with your reading and execution of different styles, try to find a band that will let you sit in at rehearsals, where you can develop your abilities with minimal risk or pressure. Express your interest in subbing to the regular drummer. Watch him or her play, and politely ask for pointers in your weak areas. Qualified,

dependable subs are sometimes scarce, so your interest may be very well received. Just don't be too aggressive or demanding; remember that you are the guest in this situation, and show your gratitude for the opportunity to be there.

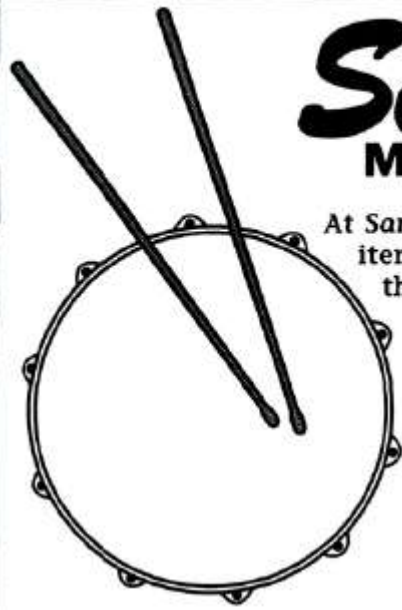
Planning Ahead

Okay, let's say you're confident in your ability to play and handle charts, you've put out the word, and you get a call to sub a gig. You might be asked to attend a rehearsal, or it might be a case of showing up and doing the gig "cold." If it's the latter, don't panic! If you're sufficiently prepared and you plan ahead, things should go fine.

Part of planning ahead is making sure you can actually do the gig as required, and this means not only musically. Can you arrive at the job on time (translation: *early),* and do you have the necessary equipment? By equipment I mean not only a drumset suitable for the varying styles of a big band, but also things like a music stand and light, extension cords, and enough cases and carts to transport your gear quickly and unobtrusively in and out of a hall. When the bandleader calls you, ask what gear you are expected to bring, and be specific. If you are called by someone other than the leader, then call the leader yourself; find out the relevant details from the person paying you *before* accepting the job.

In addition to the where, when, and what to bring, ask the leader about attire. Most big bands wear suits or conservative tuxedos, so be prepared for this possibility. Whatever the dress code is, follow it specifically; gray slacks and black shoes does *not* mean tan slacks and brown shoes! Ask politely how much the job pays. (You may actually want to ask this *first,* since some big bands pay very modestly.) Also ask if you are required to be a member of the musicians union. This is a relevant issue with big bands more often than with many other groups.

As for the drums you take to the job, you should expect to be totally unamplified, so pick your sizes and tunings with projection and definition in mind. Also make sure you



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have a ride cymbal and hi-hats with lots of volume and definition; a big band must hear these elements clearly to follow you. I always take at least one big, heavy ride and usually a second one with an alternate sound to help differentiate sections and provide a tonal change of pace.

Pre-ShowPrep

When gig day arrives there is much to do to help ensure a successful performance. Before you go, double-check that you have all of your gear and the required apparel (already on if possible), as well as directions and phone numbers. Leave early, since you will have many tasks besides setting up your drums when you arrive.

When you get to the job site, scope out the room before you begin unloading. If the leader is there, ask by what route you should carry your equipment in, where to set up, and where your cases and belongings should be stored. I often arrive at a job before the leader, in which case I politely introduce myself to the client or an appropriate staff member and ask them these questions. Keep in mind that big bands often play in upscale environments, and you should do your best to represent the group well. Don't show up looking like a slob, and don't be rude or careless in any way.

When your drums are unloaded and assembled, position them on the bandstand according to the leader's wishes, taking into account your needs as well. When possible, you should be close to the bassist and pianist, and you must have a clear line of sight to whoever will be conducting (ideally directly above or to the side of your music stand). Ask the leader who will conduct, since it may be someone else in the band.

If the group features a vocalist, try to achieve a line of sight to their position as well, as they sometimes assume conducting duties for their songs. I like to have the majority of the band to my left, since my music stand goes on that side of my kit. I also like to have the bassist in front of me so that we can see and hear one another easily. It's a fact of life that sometimes drummers must move their kit after it's already set up, especially on a small bandstand crowded with fifteen other people. If this happens, don't grumble; just do it and get on with the job.

Once you are positioned, your attention should be focused on "the book." Most big bands will supply you with a hefty portfolio filled with numbered charts. Inside there may be folders of certain charts already pulled or just a set list to help you pull and arrange the charts in the appropriate order. Check with the leader on how the book and sets are organized and familiarize yourself with them.

If you have to pull the charts yourself, do it before show time; once the band starts playing there may not be much time to fumble around looking for the next tune, and you'll need that time anyway to scope out the chart and watch the conductor for a starting tempo. It's also a good idea to ask the leader in what condition you will be expected to return the book, so that if you need to place the charts back in numerical order you can do it as you go rather than taking time after the job. As we will see, there are more important things for you to be doing then.

Ask the leader (and any vocalists) if there is anything specific they want from you musically, such as playing on top of or behind the beat, use of dynamics, how to handle tempo problems in the band should they arise, etc. Your diligence will impress, and it may even prevent some disasters. Ask the bassist the same questions privately, since he or she might have some helpful insights or suggestions as particular tunes come up. In addition to the rhythm section, befriend the nearby horn players too, if you can. Demonstrate a general desire to make things go well and you'll be amazed at how much help you can get.

Showtime!

Once the show starts, be alert—but also try to relax and enjoy the music. Be prepared for spontaneous set changes, even if the order is prearranged. This happens often and is another reason to have the conductor always in your sights. (You'll want

to be the first, not the last, to catch any announcements given to the band.) Once a tune starts, follow the chart closely, but don't bury your head in it. Be prepared to catch on-the-fly cuts and tempo changes from the conductor just in case. If something goes wrong (and believe me, little things happen all the time), don't freak out. Keep your head, be a pro, and stay positive. Remember that you're in the driver's seat and it's your job to kick the band with confidence and control, no matter what.

You'll likely play three or four sets on a given night, with fifteen- to twenty-minute breaks in between. Use these breaks to rest, but also take advantage of the opportunities they give you. Prep the book for the next set if necessary, then go mingle with the other musicians. Make some friends, network, and exchange business cards. Ask for feedback on the last set. Don't fish for compliments, but rather ask how the rhythm section feels to the band and if they can hear you clearly. This is useful information that they might not offer if you don't ask, so take the initiative.

I have one other suggestion about breaks. Food and drink are often available to the band. If you decide to partake, don't make a pig of yourself. It makes a bad impression on your colleagues and the client, and it probably won't help your performance on the next set. It's my personal policy never to drink alcohol on a gig. I wouldn't drive a car after drinking, so I don't drive a band, either.

When the gig is over, tear down and load out your gear quickly and quietly. If you have the opportunity, help others as well. There is often a lot of equipment that the leader must handle (stands, microphones, speakers), and a helping hand from you will definitely be noticed and appreciated. Make sure you shake hands with and thank at least the leader, the vocalist(s), and the rhythm section; these people are key contacts for future work. Have your business card ready for those who request it. Even if you don't want to play with the band again, be positive and gracious anyway. Pros always behave with class, and they never burn bridges.

If you do your homework, plan ahead, and play your best, it's almost hard *not* to have a successful big band gig. With the right attitude and effort, you might be amazed at how many of them turn out to be really great ones. So get out there, go for it, and good luck!

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A Mixed Bag

Safer Sound

Has anyone ever told you how to protect and preserve your hearing? If you answered "no," it's probably because we generally don't see you in our office until well after the damage has been done.

Ask yourself the following questions: Do you ever notice a ringing in your ears? If so, when do you notice it? Do you turn the TV volume up louder than normal? Do you ask people to repeat themselves? Do your ears ever feel stuffy? Does sound ever hurt your ears? Can you understand speech in a crowd? Do you use hearing protection? Human nature is such that, unless something directly impacts us, we're not apt to pursue change. Unfortunately, once noise-induced hearing loss occurs, it's after a prolonged period of abuse. Prevention of *further* deterioration then becomes key.

One of the most annoying side effects of noise is the presence of tinnitus, which is a ringing in the ears. Remedies have included biofeedback, tinnitus maskers (which emit white noise to cover up offending sounds), and hearing aids. The American Tinnitus Association (P.O. Box 5, Portland, Oregon 97207) offers information for tinnitus sufferers, physicians, and hearing health professionals, and promotes networking for the advancement of new technology.

But what can we do to *prevent* the onset of hearing-related problems in the first place? Most of us only undergo a hearing screening during childhood, unless medical reasons exist. Many hearing health providers suggest that you obtain a re-evaluation every two years, unless a change is noticed. If a problem *were* to develop, having a baseline audiogram from which to compare is essential. Early identification can lead to possible correction.

But the key element here lies in reducing the intensity of onstage performance volume. Relocating away from the sound source as much as possible through sound baffling can decrease the loudness on stage and protect you from high-intensity impact. Personal "at-the-ear" monitors, in place of conventional ones, are also gaining widespread acceptance. A customized listening environment placed in the ear provides studio-clarity sound while significantly reducing sound levels.

It's been identified that hearing protection is needed for sound levels above 86 dBA. Hearing protection devices range from foam earplugs to custom-fitted, filtered sound attenuators. Currently, the best product available to meet the needs of musicians is the *ER* series, which was developed specifically with the musician in mind. The *ER-15* attenuates about 15 dB equally across the frequency range. The *ER-25* attenuates about 25 dB, and is recommended for drummers due to the higher-intensity volume they must deal with. These devices are available through your local hearing health professional. Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

• Sheri Rubin, audiologist

Preventing Back Pain

Why must the timekeeper of the musical arena be subject to back discomfort? Aren't you the backbone of the musical process? Of course you are, but that's where it all starts—the backbone, the foundation of the human body. And unfortunately, there's a definite correlation between specific drumming postures and the advent of back pain.

The human spine and its surrounding musculature is a very intricate piece of architecture. It has more PSI (pounds per square inch) exerted upon it when a person is *seated,* compared to standing. While sitting for long periods of time, the spinal joint structures become susceptible, which may predispose a person to premature wear and tear.

Also, when you're drumming, your arms and legs are somewhat extended. This compounds the pressure on the spinal joint spaces. So what can you do to help prevent the onset of back problems due to drumming? 1) Get involved in a stretching regimen. Yoga, athletic, or dance-like stretching are all good. 2) Engage in a progressive resistance program that involves moderate weightlifting. 3) Educate yourself on the importance of good posture habits. 4) Look into a program of chiropractic care.

Some of the best drummers in the world suffered from back pain. Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich are prime examples. Unfortunately, Buddy required surgery. And though surgery should never be fully ruled out when serious problems occur, it's always logical to take a conservative approach *before* jumping on the surgical bandwagon. Implement one or more of the above preventive routines, and you may save yourself from unnecessary surgical intervention.

• Gregory McDermott, D.C.

Morton's Neuroma

Forefoot pain from drumming can occasionally be caused by a nerve disorder called Morton's Neuroma, which is a thickening of the small nerves that pass between the bones that form the base of the toes. Repetitive contact with bass drum foot pedals can cause injury to these small nerves.

The neuroma appears as a thickening in the nerve itself. Generally, the nerve is quite small and the thickness of a pencil lead. But the neuroma can be quite large—the size of a pea or corn kernel. An orthopedic physician can diagnose the problem by squeezing the region between the bases of the toes, or by squeezing the forefoot itself. Numbness in the toes also results from Morton's Neuroma.

Modifying the shoe, taking anti-inflammatory medications, or having a cortisone injection can be helpful in decreasing the pain. Sometimes, these interventions can be curative. If pain persists, removal of the neuroma may be indicated. This involves outpatient surgery where a small incision is made over the top of the foot directly over the painful area. A bandage is worn for one or two weeks, though there may be some mild discomfort for four to six weeks after surgery.

The best way to guard *against* neuroma is to wear well-padded shoes that decrease the shock of repetitive impact against the foot pedals. Should a problem occur, consultation with an orthopedic surgeon is recommended. It may be helpful to check if the surgeon is comfortable treating the problem. You may be referred to an orthopedic surgeon with special training in foot or ankle surgery, or someone with more experience in this kind of diagnosis.

• Jonathan S. Jaivin, M.D.

Drugs And Alcohol

It's no great secret that too much alcohol, either alone or combined with other drugs, will greatly inhibit a musician's ability to perform effectively.

Alcohol is a sedative that works on the central nervous system. It dulls the senses, numbs the nerves, and makes reaction times slower. Blurring of eyesight or double vision can occur when too much alcohol is ingested. How *much* is too much can only be determined by a person's body weight.

Cocaine, like alcohol, also works on the central nervous system. It stimulates the endorphin releasing center of the brain, the part that makes us feel better when we hurt. Cocaine stimulates this brain center in a way that makes it release all these endorphins at once. This chemical reaction makes us feel good, but the feeling is short-lived, so we spend a lifetime—and a *lot* of money—trying to recapture the feeling. It's an impossible task. Cocaine, like alcohol, also effects our ability to think rationally. Hallucinations, convulsions, strokes, and cardiac arrest can all result. Every fear you can imagine becomes a reality when you're addicted to a narcotic.

It's a proven medical fact that drugs and alcohol affect a musician's performance. The list of those special musicians who touched our lives—but who had their careers cut short by drug or alcohol abuse—runs long. The great Keith Moon died of respiratory failure caused by overindulging in narcotics. It's thought that the legendary John Bonham died in much the same way—the result of a deadly overdose of barbiturates mixed with alcohol.

Don't be stereotyped. Dare to be different. Don't be fooled by the idea that you have to drink or use drugs to be a good musician. All the so-called *good,* drunk, and drugged-out musicians are either dead—or out of work. Drug and alcohol abuse will take its toll on you—and on everything you value in life.

•David F. Dillon

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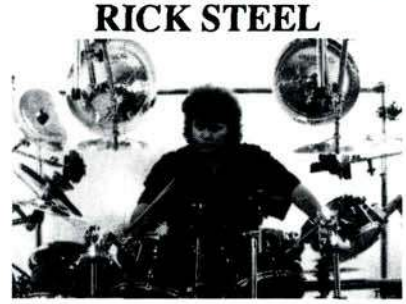

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Medeski, Martins Wood's Billy Martin

by Bill Milkowski

On their recent whirlwind tour of the States, the merry band of groovemeisters collectively known as Medeski, Martin & Wood piled into a cozy RV and hit the road, towing all their band equipment behind them in a small trailer. Their mission: to bring their provocative amalgam of organ-trio jazz, hip-hop backbeats, and wide-open improvisation to the ears of the uninitiated. Like wandering minstrels of yore, they crisscrossed the country, driving 500 miles between gigs from one alternative rock joint to the next, up and down the East Coast and stretching into the Southwest, before returning to their home base of New York City.

By the time they pulled into New Orleans (a city whose inhabitants are intimately acquainted with the concept of groove), the MM&W boys were primed to lay down some serious funk. Inspired by the spicy seafood and earthy, laid-back ambiance of the Big Easy, they turned in a stellar performance at the Howlin' Wolf, one of the more adventurous venues in the Crescent City. And they came away from that gig with a whole bunch of new fans—many of whom had probably never heard jazz at all before.

One of the most enthusiastic listeners in the crowd that night was the local music critic, who had grown up with second-line rhythms deeply ingrained in her brain and who had countless opportunities to dig such profoundly funky drummers as Zigaboo Modeliste, James Black, Herman Earnest, and Herlin Riley. At some point during MM&W's smoking performance, she turned to me and exclaimed quite excitedly, "We *never* get to hear drummers like this down here."

That same sentiment is probably echoed in every city that Billy Martin travels to with cohorts John Medeski and Chris Wood. Martin is a special player indeed. The spirit of Brazil and Africa courses through his young bones, yet he remains wide open to the rhythmic invention coming out of the hip-hop and acid jazz scene. With MM&W, he fuses all of those influences—along with his ongoing love of hard-swinging, straight-ahead jazz—into a hybrid style that is wholly fresh and infectious.

Though he has toured and recorded with the likes of Bob Moses, Chuck Mangione, the Lounge Lizards, and John Zorn's Masada, Martin's original voice on the kit is best represented by his three recordings with Medeski, Martin & Wood: *Notes From The Underground* on Hap Jones, and their two Gramavision releases, *It's A Jungle In Here* and *Friday Afternoon In The Universe.*

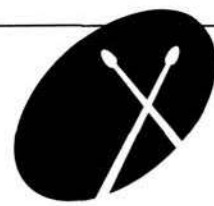
"My overall concept is based on the dance aspect of drumming," says the thirty-one-year-old New York native. "I've always been attracted to dance music, whatever it may be—from the Police to Grandmaster Flash to Duke Ellington to Brazilian music to African music. But I think the most inspiring music to me as a drummer by far is African music—particularly the more traditional stuff. I can't think of any music that is more sophisticated rhythmically. There are a lot of melodic things happening in the drumming that relates to vocal sounds and language, and that is a major influence on my drumming."

In the context of MM&W, Billy often finds himself locked into call-and-response conversations with keyboardist and kindred spirit John Medeski, whose percussive attack on Wurlitzer organ and clavinet serves as the perfect foil for Martin's melodic approach to the kit. The two also groove mightily alongside guitarist Marc Ribot in John Zorn's Masada, an audacious, blowing quartet that tackles klezmer-type material with an Ornette Coleman attitude. Says Martin of his rhythmic partner, "We have a really great connection rhythmically. Medeski would be an incredible drummer if he wanted to be—besides the fact that he's so bluesy and knows so much music and is totally open. So we really get along musically."

Acoustic bassist Chris Wood anchors the MM&W trio with the kind of authoritative, huge-toned lines that would make any hip-hop crew drool. This heavy-duty bottom frees Martin up to dance on top of the groove with melodic fills and accents that bring his extensive percussion background—as well as his love of funk—into play. "I'd played in rock 'n' roll bands and classical and big band jazz stuff—but never serious straight-ahead jazz," says Billy. "I had done club dates for years, but the first time I played serious creative jazz music was when I got together with John and Chris. Basically what I'm doing is playing jazz with a backbeat and using grace notes in the way that Clyde Stubblefield would. Before, I think the closest that I could come to jazz in terms of swinging the notes was to incorporate the funky rap hip-hop style drumming, because I related to that more than anything else."

Prior to his fateful meeting with Medeski and Wood, Martin had strictly played percussion with a number of groups, including the Lounge Lizards, Bob Moses, and Chuck Mangione. Basically self-taught, he had taken a few lessons with percussion master Frankie Malabe at Drummers Collective in New York. By the time he joined the Lounge Lizards in 1990, he had happened onto a personalized approach to the congas. "I began playing them with sticks," he explains. "I was inspired to do this by the Burundi drummers. I had seen them play in Amsterdam at a drum festival, and I was choked up, it was so beautiful. It was a huge drum band and they played with these big thick mallets, getting an incredible rhythm somewhere between swinging and straight 8th notes. It was seriously grooving. So I incorporated that style when I joined the Lounge Lizards. I would use the butt end of really fat drumsticks to get the tone out of the drum. It became this real melodic instrument."

"The most grooving rhythms have a call-and-response vibe. They have a balance, like a see-saw thing."



Martin's immersion into Brazilian music happened ten years ago, when he was introduced to the samba by some jamming partners. "That really changed my whole direction," he says. "Before that I was playing Broadway shows like Bob Fosse's *Dancin'*. I was also doing some classical music and a little bit of jazz, but the Brazilian thing became a big influence on my percussion style. By playing with caxixi and tambourine and surdo, it really made me realize that it's not the rhythm or phrase you're playing that really matters but the actual *sound* you're making. I incorporate that idea onto the kit when I play with Medeski, Martin & Wood. It's all orchestration."

Martin was also greatly influenced by New York's highly adventurous downtown scene, which took John Cage's liberating notions about all sounds being equal and ran wild with it. "I was inspired by the downtown scene because it was totally open to playing anything, any kind of instrument. So it was the perfect time for me to incorporate that thing into my per-

SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE.*

* Clinical studies have established a link between early music training and the development of the higher brain functions required for language, math and science. [Rauscher, Shaw, Levine, Ky and Wright (UC Irvine - 1994)]

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM IDM '95

Promoting Drumming and International Drum Month.

INTERNATIONAL DRUM MONTH

cussion setup. It was a mixture of skin drums with tones, metal sounds, cowbells, and other hand percussion—like talking drum. And that setup just developed over a couple of years with the Lounge Lizards."

To keep in touch with the kit during his tenure with the Lizards, Martin formed Illy B, a side project that gigged infrequently at New York's Knitting Factory. About a year later, while still working with the Lizards, he met John Medeski and Chris Wood. "They had seen me playing around Boston with Bob Moses," he recalls. "John was really into my style of playing—the funkiness with the swing feel. So we made a point of getting together after he came to New York. We started off playing duets, then he brought Chris by one day for a jam session at my place, and it just clicked. About a week later we started doing gigs at the Village Gate, playing some standards and some things that we had written on the spot when we were jamming. That was the most inspiring music I had played on drums up to that point. It made me realize what I really wanted to do. I wanted to use my feet again. I wanted to be a drummer."

The secret weapon in Billy's kit is a 20" bass drum he picked up in Jamaica for $100. "It's a Rastafarian religious drum," he says, "very raw-looking, very African-oriented with goatskin heads. I saw this drum on the beach in Negrill. There are a lot of shacks set up to sell T-shirts and carved sculptures to tourists, and one of these was filled with drums. Initially, I thought this particular drum might work as a surdo drum, like the Brazilian drummers use. It had such a deep, beautiful tone that I just had to get it. So I brought it back and used it here and there. But I never used it as a bass drum with a pedal until I got together with John and Chris.

"This was also around the time I was getting seriously into playing hip-hop drums and thinking about the big, open bass drums you hear on dance music—that Roland *TR-808* sample. The Rastafarian drum had it, so I wanted to try to incorporate it into my set. John and Chris encouraged me to use it on our first Village Gate gig about five years ago, and I've used it as my primary bass drum ever since."

To balance off that rich low end, Billy added a 10" Brady snare to his kit to give him a high end with nice tone. "I'm not big on the latest, hippest drum equipment," he confides, "but when I saw this tiny Brady drum I had to have it. Piccolo snare drums are usually 14", but they're real skinny. There's really no tone out of those drums, just a high piercing sound. But I knew that the Brady drum would be perfect for the hip-hop sound that I was developing because it's deeper and has some tone. So the big bass drum sound and the snare sound gave me a perfect balance—to have that conversation going within the kit."

Billy's kit also includes a Yamaha snare, two Yamaha tom-toms, some bongos, and the various metal percussion he used to play in the Lounge Lizards. To his left is a Brazilian drum called a repique, a call drum used by samba groups. "I use it kind of like a timbale that I can hit with my left hand to make accents," says Billy. "So my setup became a real blend of the percussion thing that I had been doing with the Lizards and the drumset style that I was developing. Add a couple of cymbals and a hi-hat and that's how it all came about."

Billy was born on October 30, 1963 in New York City and grew up in the neighborhood of Washington Heights in an artistic environment. His father was a classical violinist and his mother, a former Rockette, was a dance teacher. "Mom would use Duke Ellington and Stevie Wonder music for her classes," he recalls. "Plus, my brothers were eight and ten years older than me, so the music they were listening to also influenced me...everything from Sly Stone to the Allman Brothers to the Rolling Stones. My Dad was playing with the New York City Ballet, so I heard Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky, and all that kind of stuff. Also, my neighborhood had Dominicans and Puerto Ricans, so I was hearing a lot of salsa and merengue on the street."

After moving to New Jersey when he was eleven, Billy began taking drum lessons with Alan Herman, a working professional in the Broadway pit orchestras who was himself a student of Joe Morello.

Billy later studied with Michael Carvin and Kenwood Dennard before checking out Brazilian percussion and drumming with Manuel Montiero and Frankie Malabe at Drummer's Collective. "That's where I met Bob Moses, Jaco Pastorius, Mike Gibbs, Mike Stern, Bill Frisell—all these creative jazz musicians," Martin recalls. "The Collective exposed me to a completely different scene...not only the Brazilian percussion thing, but also these musicians who were deeply rooted in jazz. So it changed my whole life."

Moses started using Martin for his projects around 1983, including his *Meeting With The Great Spirit* recording for Gramavision. As he got further into Brazilian music, Billy also began gigging with Brazilian percussion ensembles like Pei De Boi and Batucada. During this period, Moses took him on a European tour as part of a drumming trio that included the Brazilian percussionist Meme, a longtime sideman with Hermeto Pascoal and Egberto Gismonti. "I definitely owe a lot to Moses for all those early opportunities," says Billy. "And I will always owe him for his influence and his creative spirit."

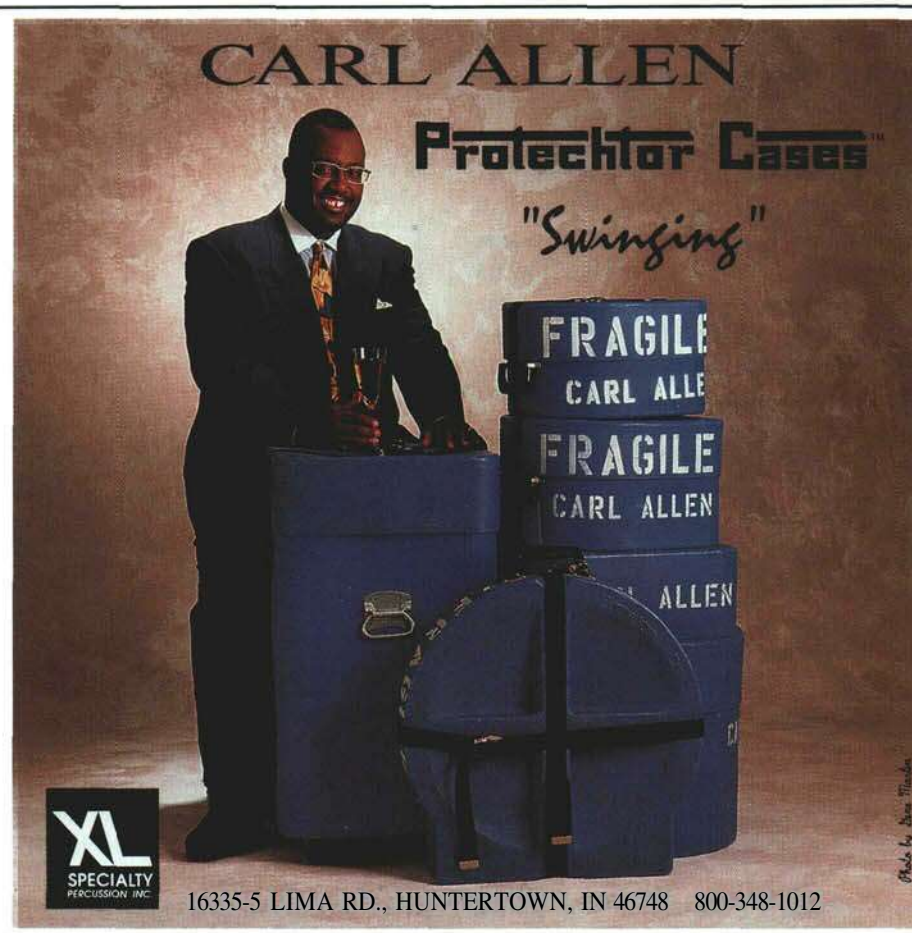
After his adventurous apprenticeship with Moses, Martin landed a somewhat more lucrative gig with trumpeter Chuck Mangione in 1986. "Playing with Moses and all these creative musicians was always very stimulating," he recalls, "but I wasn't making that much money. It was actually my mom who found out about the gig with Chuck Mangione. She had met him and heard that he was looking for a percussionist, and basically she said, 'Try my son.' So he had an audition and I brought in a couple of congas and played the Brazilian style that I had developed. It fit perfectly into his music."

Martin stayed on Chuck's gig for three years, eventually replacing Joe Bonadio on drums. In retrospect he says, "It wasn't the most creative, open music, but it was good money and good experience to play in front of audiences of thousands of people every night. Also, learning to adapt my percussion thing to Chuck's style was challenging. And one thing I must thank Chuck for was that he never told me what to do, ever. He trusted me for what I was as a musician, and I really respected him for that. When he would give me a solo, the whole band would walk off the stage for ten or fifteen minutes. I really just went off into my own world. From years of doing that, I really started to develop my own thing, solo-wise—to create within myself rather than just playing over a vamp or some changes. So that gig helped me a lot in terms of building my soloing concept."

After his stint with Mangione, Martin got involved with a group of musical renegades on the downtown scene. "I started to discover music that was happening at the Knitting Factory," he recalls. "Someone had recommended me for a band called Chunk, which was all based on samples and electronic drumming. I ended up playing drums in that band, and it worked well. The leader, Samm Bennett, was into Brazilian and African music as well, so we related on that level. I stayed in Chunk for two years, and we toured Europe in addition to playing regularly at the Knitting Factory. So that gig was sort of a bridge for me back into a creative scene."

Martin also played with Ned Rothenberg's Double Quartet before getting the call from saxophonist John Lurie to join the Lounge Lizards. He still plays in Lurie's National Orchestra, a sax-drums-percussion trio with Lizards drummer Calvin Weston. But Martin's main priority at this point is Medeski, Martin & Wood. "With this band, I feel like I'm part of a real change in music," says Billy. "People have been asking for it without knowing what it is. Basically, it's about being more creative and open, breaking some rules, getting out of the typical category of whatever it might be...jazz, funk, rock."

Martin is particularly fond of the interaction that takes place on the bandstand each night with MM&W. "It's a conversation," he says. "The most grooving rhythms have a call-and-response vibe. They have a balance, like a see-saw thing. It's always moving, and it really transcends all the music that I play as a drummer."



What Am I Worth?

by Bob Cianci

Have you ever been offered a gig you didn't want? All of us have been faced with this dilemma at some point in our professional lives. Something just doesn't feel right. Perhaps the gig is too far away. Maybe the band plays a style of music that is not to your liking, or perhaps you lack confidence in your ability to play that style convincingly. It could be you don't like the club or the neighborhood in which it's located. Maybe you've had problems before with the owner of that particular club.

Most often, though, turning down a gig is a matter of money—or the lack of it. Let me illustrate the point with two examples.

Although I work on a regular basis with a rock band, I enjoy free-lancing as much as possible—preferably with jazz, blues, or contemporary country acts. I got a call from an up-and-coming blues band that offered me three fill-in gigs, two of which I was free to play. We went through all the details insofar as where the gigs were, start and end times, the band's song list, what to wear, and so forth. Then came The Big Question: What do these gigs pay?

"Well, uh, er, we can only pay you fifty bucks for each gig."

I was disappointed, but I tried to be as diplomatic as I could with the reply, "I'm sorry, but I have a dollar minimum I work for. Unless you can meet that minimum, I'm afraid I just can't do the gigs."

Another time, I worked a job with a guitarist and keyboard player at a rather funky but friendly neighborhood bar for the sum of $65 and a complimentary dinner. I did so with the understanding that if the leader liked what he heard, he would re-hire me for more money. The gig went well, and sure enough, Mr. Leader rang me up the following week with more work.

"This is going to be a $60 gig because it's a Tuesday night."

Again, my answer was no. I simply refused to take less than I felt I was worth. This attitude has nothing whatsoever to do with arrogance. It is simply setting limits regarding the minimum amount of money that I, as a highly trained and experienced professional, will accept. And I believe this

"You studied your instrument, practiced your tush off, and paid some serious dues. You deserve to be treated like a professional."

is an attitude that every working drummer should consider.

Look at it like this: You studied your instrument, practiced your tush off, and paid some serious dues sweating through the tough times. You've worked in lousy dumps for drunken patrons and vermin-like club owners who treated you like a subhuman dirtbag. If you have done all these things, then you deserve to be treated like a professional and should be paid accordingly.

Here's another way to look at it: Let's say you're getting $60 for a gig. You pack the car and leave at 7:30 P.M., arrive at 8:15 or so, set up, play until 1:30 or 2:00 A.M., then tear down, pack up, drive home, and unload at 3:30. That's eight hours of work. Break that $60 down hourly and you have earned the princely sum of $7.50 per hour—*less,* of course, gas, tolls, wear and tear on your vehicle, and general upkeep of your instrument.

We're worth more than $7.50 per hour, wouldn't you agree?

This problem doesn't occur just with us average working stiffs. In 1981, I became acquainted with Rick Laird, the talented bassist formerly with the Mahavishnu Orchestra. During our conversation, he began to open up a bit about what had transpired with his career since his band—which had enjoyed such great success in a relatively short time—had broken up. "I don't understand it," he said, wistfully. "I get called to play these mainstream jazz gigs, and all they want to pay me is forty or fifty bucks. After Mahavishnu, you'd think I could command much more than that."

You must also closely examine your priorities. Most drummers are musical junkies. I understand this happy affliction all too well. I love to play, too, but my priorities break down something like this: Family, day job, drumming career, writing, paying a mortgage, paying bills, paying a car note, putting food on the table, and trying to figure out how on earth I'm going to put two kids through college and still have a few bucks to retire on someday. These are serious financial responsibilities that place a premium on my time.

If you are a young musician with few financial worries, it is much easier to work

for less money. And so you should, if it helps further your career. However, this doesn't mean you should let yourself be used and abused by a disreputable club owner.

Final example: A former student of mine told me about a raw deal his band experienced a few years ago. He booked a date at a local heavy metal club. The owner gave the band one hundred $3 tickets to sell. They were to be paid based on the number of tickets sold. When the band showed up at the gig with about fifty tickets left, the club owner made the band pay *him* for the remainder of the unsold tickets. In other words, it cost them almost $150 to play the gig! (I'm glad to report that that cockroach of a club owner went out of business.)

The band learned a valuable lesson. They never made another mistake like that again and always insisted on a reasonable guarantee at every club. If the owner was unwilling to agree with their terms, they calmly told him to go fly a kite. These young musicians learned to say no. They turned down work that wasn't right and developed a sense of pride in their band that was exuded not in an arrogant manner, but with a businesslike confidence.

Remember, as long as musicians agree to play for peanuts, someone will take unfair advantage. Don't let that happen to you. You're a pro. Have pride in your talent and ability. Set a minimum dollar amount on your time, and learn to say no gracefully.

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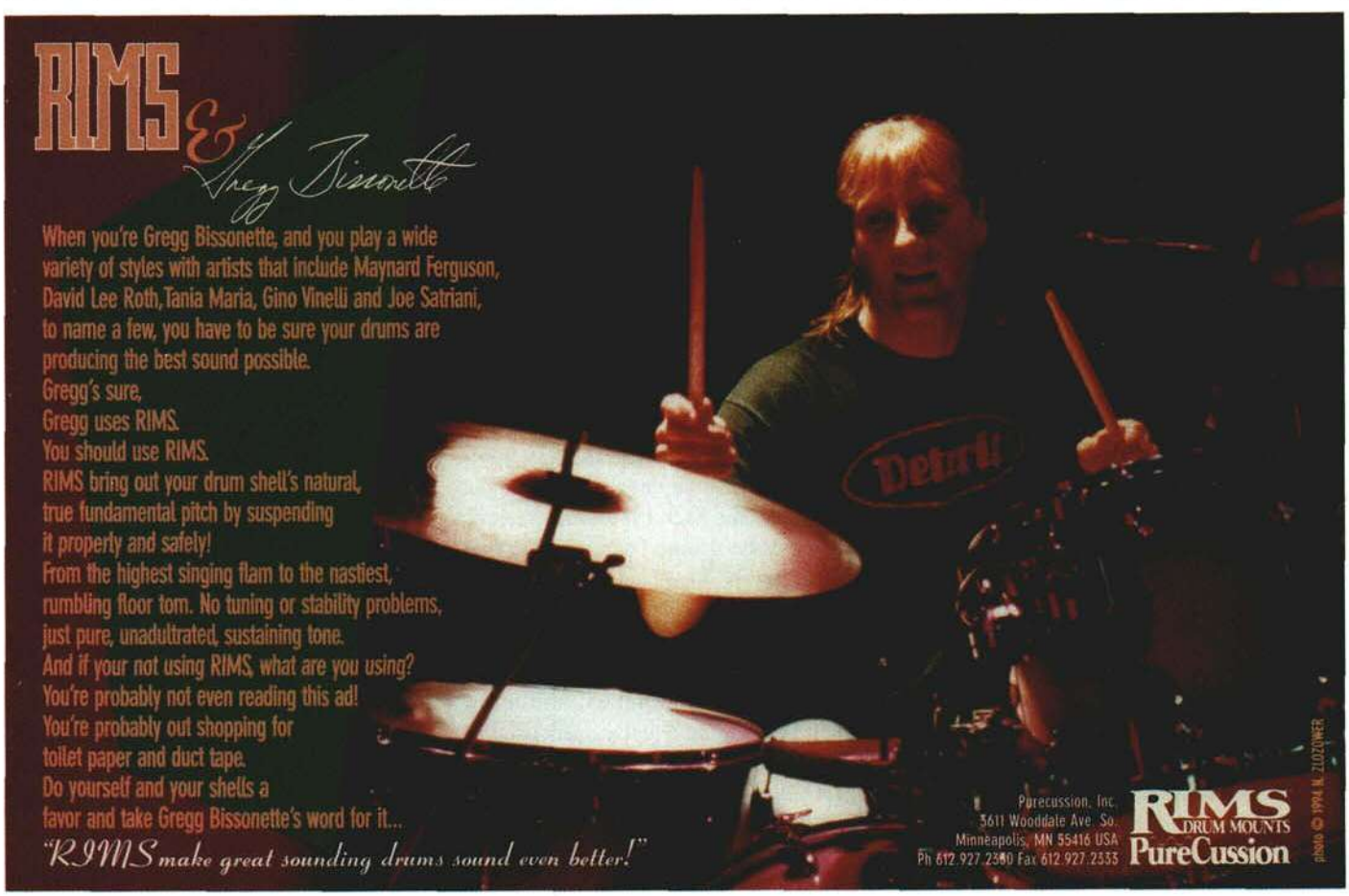


Gretsch Broadkaster Floor Show

by Harry Cangany

I have two quick theories about classic American drums. One is that everybody has owned *something* made by Ludwig. Second, no other brand seems to have elicited loyalty like Gretsch.

Famous players talk about the Gretsch set they have at home in the closet. Modern manufacturers state that they try to make drums sound like "Gretsch drums from the '50s." Endorsers use one brand in person—but you suspect that their studio sound may be created on 3- or 6-ply "round badge" Gretsch drums.

Collectors also have a loyalty to Gretsch. Over the phone or in fliers, the letters "RB" stand for "round badge." The shape of the badge identifies the drums' time and place of origin: the classic pre-'70s Gretsch days in Brooklyn, New York. While snare badges are always at the vent hole, many tom-toms and bass drums don't have vents—so their badges are held in place by single upholstery tacks.

The drum pictured is a 3-ply, 1950s, pre-silver-paint *Broadkaster Floor Show* model. (Before the interiors were coated with Gretsch's now-familiar silver sealer, the factory left them unfinished.) At the time this drum was made, Gretsch was still using a double-flanged die-cast hoop. Later models and current drums have hoops with a rounded top edge.

While I admit that yellow-green sparkle is one of my least favorite colors, I could not pass up this drum for a number of reasons. First, the strainer—the notorious *Micro-Sensitive*—works well. Many *Micro-Sensitives* "bite the dust" because the strainer arm breaks off right above the threads. The Gretsch design is so small that regular use causes more strain than the unit can take. If this happens to you, I suggest extracting the arm, then re-threading the receiving assembly using a larger diameter.

It's very frustrating (but very typical) to find vintage Gretsch snare drums with extra holes—usually for Ludwig strainers. I caution readers to withhold the temptation to ruin the collectibility of these drums by such an installation. Instead, I suggest the following procedure, with which I've had great success.

Cut a piece of thin, flat steel or aluminum shorter than the distance between the top and bottom hoop. Drill holes in this "plate" to mount it on the snare drum using the original strainer holes. Next drill holes in the plate so that you can mount a new strainer on it. Use the mounting screws backwards so that the threaded rod and nut that hold it come back toward the strainer, not toward the drum. Then, with rubber washers between the plate and drum shell, mount the new complete strainer/plate unit in the original strainer holes.

By using this method, you save the drum, keep the value intact, and allow yourself time to find a replacement original strainer. Believe me, the next owner will respect your decision.

The *Broadkaster* pictured has two other features that are appealing. First, the butt side of the snare is tightened with a small T-shaped unit called the *Fast Tension* snare bracket, which was replaced in the '60s by another bracket shaped like the lower-cost *Renown* strainer. People are always looking for the *Fast Tension,* so if you have one (and no drum), there are plenty of buyers. If you have a drum that needs one, take a number and get in line.

Second, this drum has been signed by the members of a world-famous rock 'n' roll band. Now, I can't swear for sure that these are original signatures, but I *have* heard that Charlie Watts likes Gretsch green sparkle!

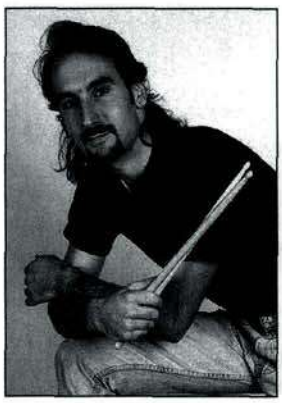
A 1950s Gretsch 3-ply *Broadkaster* is a wonderful drum. The 110-year-old history of this company, the almost fanatical loyalty of its customers, and the "great Gretsch sound" make every eight-lug, round badge, *Micro-Sensitive* model well worth the money.

Current collector prices should be in the $200-500 range, depending on the condition and finish. Be sure to check the *Micro-Sensitive* strainer and the snare adjustment, and look for extra holes behind and underneath the strainer.

Matt Chirsky

Twenty-five-year-old Matt Chirsky's career has been based on versatility. "I've done everything from Motown to metal," says the Meriden, Connecticut drummer. "Currently I'm teaching and I'm also involved in two working regional bands: the Breakfast Band (current and classic rock) and Old #7 (country originals and covers). Between both bands I play about 150 shows a year!"

A self-taught drummer who makes a point to listen to "all styles of music—with an emphasis on jazz and classic rock," Matt's favorite music lo *play* is "anything that's in the pocket and grooves!" He cites Neil Peart, John Bonham, and Phil Collins (in his Brand X days) as major influences, with "honorable mention" lo Buddy Rich and Milch Mitchell. Those influences—along with his own creativity and versatility—are amply demonstrated on Matt's demo tape.



Matt's gear varies with the gig, but he relies primarily on a five-piece Tama *Granstar* kit with Paiste cymbals, assorted Tama and CP hardware, and a Gibraltar rack. And while he's currently "a banker by day and a drummer by night," his goal is to "make a living playing drums—on the road or in the studio—and lo tour nationally and overseas." He'd also like lo be recognized as an influence on other musicians.

"I'm a rock drummer al heart," says Matt, "but I'm not afraid to venture into other avenues. Keep an open mind, and if an opportunity to try something different comes your way, give it a shot!"

Eddie Del Gaudio

Staten Island's Eddie Del Gaudio currently plays six nights a week with five different bands—ranging from progressive rock lo blues lo techno-pop to funk—and a rock musical. He has also diversified into other areas of the music business, including serving as drum and keyboard lech for the 1990 Steve Miller/Lou Gramm tour and as a production assistant on the *Arsenio Hall* and *Tonight* television shows.

"I started banging on the usual assortment of pots and pans," says Eddie, "until I joined the school band in the fourth grade. My parents bought me my first drumkit when I was thirteen. For months I played along with the radio and records lo improve my abilities. Eventually, I grew confident about my future in music."

Since that time Eddie has studied with a variety of teachers while developing his skills at drumming, writing, and recording. He describes his style as one that "combines creative and expressive ideas with a powerful and dynamic sound." His demo tape substantiates this, displaying clean, precise technique combined with musicality.

Eddie plays an eight-piece Tama *Imperialstar* kit with Zildjian cymbals, Tama and Gibraltar hardware, and several electronic triggers "to access a world of sounds." His goals are to continue working with a variety of local bands, while actively pursuing record deals with original artists and touring to support those records. He also hopes to develop his studio work and to pass on his experience and knowledge by teaching and writing.

Bob Gannon

"My favorite drummers have always been simple, solid players who feature taste over technique," says Bob Gannon. "My earliest drumming influences start with Charlie Walls and Ringo, and continue through guys like Levon Helm and Max Weinberg. Having produced records, I greatly admire drummers who hear the entire piece and understand that the best note you can play is sometimes a silent one."

Bob grew up in New Jersey, playing in cover bands from the age of fourteen until he moved to L.A. to attend college. There he hooked up with several local bands and also began lo produce independent recordings. Eventually, he co-founded Through The Woods, a staple of the acoustic music scene in L.A. and a band whose sound Bob describes as "junkyard."

To suit the band's eclectic musical identity, Bob created a unique stand-up drumkit (featured in last month's *Kit Of The Month* department) that combines drums, percussion, and "found objects." Bob's playing with Through The Woods reveals him lo be a distinctively original musician, with taste and creativity lo spare. (The band itself was named 1994 Acoustic Band Of The Year by the National Academy of Songwriters. A CD is currently in production.

Now thirty-four, Bob says he plans to continue producing, when possible. But his life is currently focused on recording, promoting, and performing with Through The Woods. "The bandmembers are great musicians and true friends," he says. "I'm in my dream band, and I feel very fortunate."

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), your influences, your current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Feel free to include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it. We'd also like a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.

Ray McKinley

by Rick Van Horn

Ray McKinley, a popular big band drummer best known for his work with the Glenn Miller Orchestra, died on Sunday, May 7, in Florida. He was eighty-four.

McKinley was the product of an era that preceded the emergence of drummers bent on showing what they could do. Instead, he directed his energies toward being a supportive player. He possessed a natural, flowing time feel, and was a masterful timekeeper.

A native of Fort Worth, Texas, McKinley began playing at the age of four. His career began in the Fort Worth and Dallas areas with local bands, and his first major break occurred in 1926 with the Duncan Marin band. After stints with bands in Nashville and Pittsburgh, McKinley joined Milt Shaw & the Detroiters at New York's Roseland Ballroom in 1930. Shortly thereafter he became a member of the famed Dorsey Brothers band. After the two brothers split, McKinley stayed with Jimmy Dorsey until 1939. He later co-led a band with Will Bradley, had his own band briefly in 1942, and then joined the world-renowned Glenn Miller band. After the war he formed his own band again, but called it quits in 1951. Unable to fully retire, he later led the revived Glenn Miller Orchestra from 1956 through 1966.

Carmen Mastern, guitarist in the Miller band, fondly recalled Ray McKinley, saying, "Mac realized that it was the rhythm section—not any *one* player—that really was important. A lot of drummers don't care about the rhythm section. They play for themselves. McKinley seldom forgot *why* he was there, and what he should do." McKinley's well-known contemporary, Cliff Leeman, said of him: "Unlike many of the highly technical drummers, McKinley combined elements of showmanship with thoughtful, feeling performances. He never ignored his timekeeping duties. Mac's work reminded other drummers of what had to be done."

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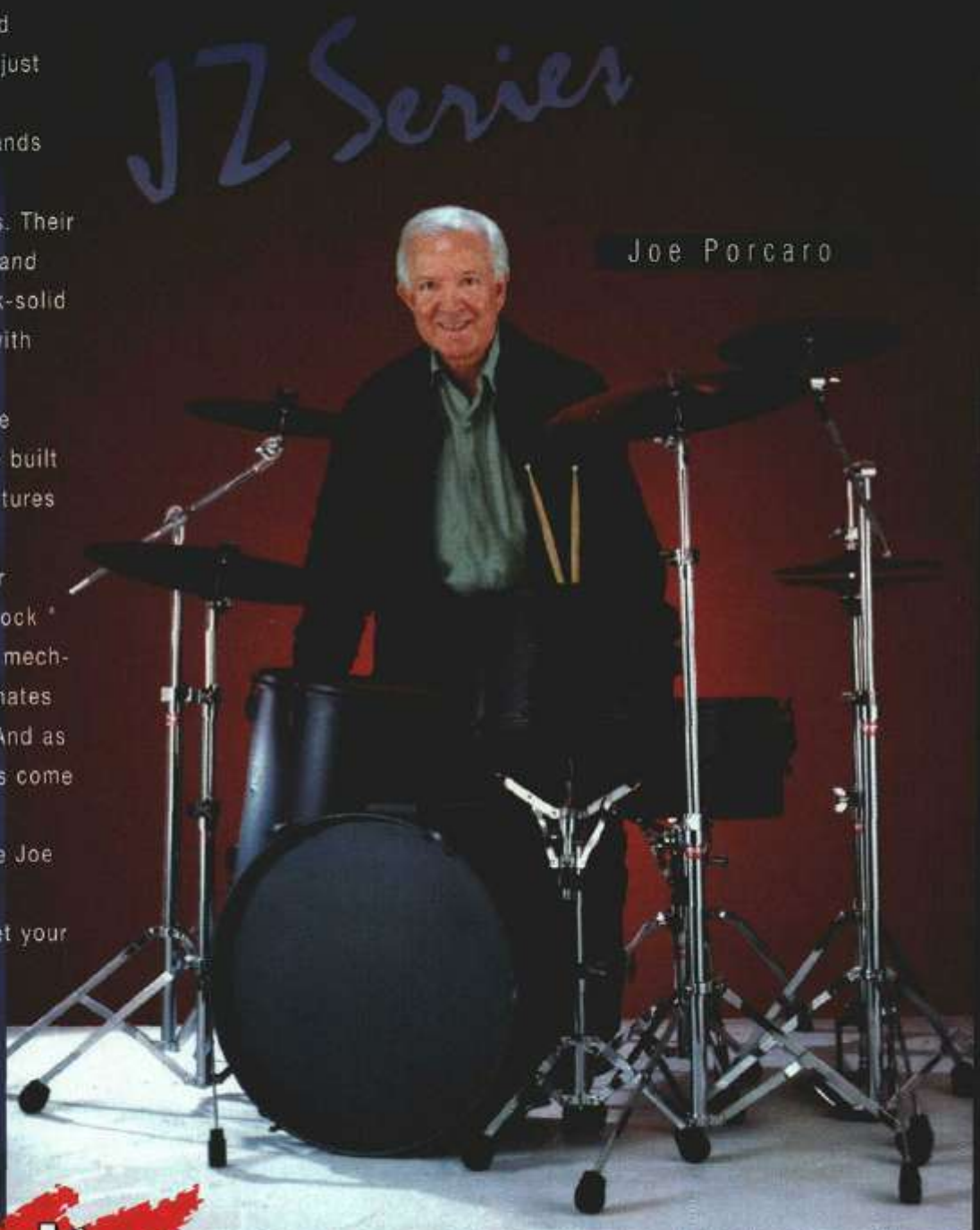

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Drumming Fallacies: Part 2

by Gary Griswold

Last month we looked at a few "drumming falacies," common misconceptions about drummers that get in the way of our goals—and those of other musicians. Let's take a look at some more of these unfortunate notions.

Fallacy #6: Drummers Should Never Take Any Guff, Especially About The Timekeeping

Just because a lot of other musicians hold a mistaken belief doesn't mean you should never have to work with them. In fact, a great many excellent and otherwise intelligent musicians consider many of the fallacies mentioned here to be true—especially the one about drummers holding all responsibility for the group's timekeeping. And if you go around with your hackles up, not willing to take the slightest negative comment from anyone, you'll get very few gigs-

The truth is, if you really want to work as a musician, you'll have to take a *lot* of guff. You just need to decide if that's getting in the way of your being the best musician you can be—and if so, deal with it professionally.

Sometimes all we're talking about is listening to some comments or chiding from another bandmember. Learn to graciously accept advice from other musicians—particularly those who aren't drummers, for they are giving you perspective on your playing you can get nowhere else. I've found that the tips and preferences expressed by other musicians—especially older players who are more familiar with the music—have given me insights on playing that I might never have gained in years of lessons or listening to records. Even if they don't always express their views in the most tactful manner, I look for the value of their comments. So if the old-timer who's holding down the first trumpet chair walks over to you during a break, puts his hand on your shoulder, and proceeds to give you a few tips about how to "really swing," listen; it's probably priceless information.

Unfortunately, there are still those rare occasions when the situation goes beyond

"The truth is, if you really want to work as a musician, you'll have to take a *lot* of guff. You just need to decide if that's getting in the way of your being the best musician you can be."

advice or chiding and you find yourself treated unfairly on the job. I've worked with directors, bandleaders, and fellow musicians whose idiosyncrasies ran the spectrum from slightly loony to completely insane. Some folks you'll work for or with will have a "thing" about drummers, and there will be no way to please them. One bandleader complained about the way I hold the sticks, how many rimshots I included in a tune, the choice/model of my sticks, when I did or didn't use brushes, the color of the drumset, and the type of drumheads I was using—all in one evening! In the course of a few weeks, I had one bandleader state that I was primarily a rock drummer, another say that I was too "jazzy," and yet another comment that I played too much like a classical percussionist. I've also had a director inform me that my cymbals were too big for the music we were playing, only to say later in the same rehearsal that they "sounded too small."

Lucidly, I've mostly worked with excellent directors and bandleaders who have given me solid advice that was tastefully presented, and whose tips have been accurate and helpful. Their wisdom has nurtured me as a player, and their encouragement, particularly as I was starting out, helped build my confidence.

For a beginner, though, it's hard to figure out whether you really are doing terribly or are being unfairly criticized. One way to tell is to consider what kind of person and musician the critic is. Do the other musicians seem to respect him or her? Or does he/she seem to be negative about everything and everyone?

When in doubt, take the guff. Gigs are scarce and drummers plentiful, so don't make a scene. Grin and bear it, and later consider what to do.

Fallacy #7: Good Drummers Are "Cool"

What I mean here is the most *negative* context of "cool": shows up late, smokes when it's not appropriate, often has too much to drink, never seems to care about acting like a professional. In my experience the "cool" players usually aren't that good and can't be relied upon.

I learned this lesson early in my playing career. I started out as one of three drummers who played in my high school jazz band. I was definitely low man both in

playing ability and experience. The other two were technical monsters: One was a jazz guy who could play the Chapin book cold (and did so in most tunes) and the other was a solid funk/rock player with lots of experience.

The problem with these guys, though, is that they were "cool." They'd show up late to rehearsals, play around a lot when the band was practicing, and generally goof off at every opportunity. I was just barely learning to play solid time, but I made sure I showed up, paid attention, and treated the situation as if it were important.

A gig was coming up for the band to play a local junior high. One of the other drummers and I were supposed to play; the third couldn't make it. The other drummer coming to the gig said that this time he'd bring his drums for us to use, since it was his turn to provide the kit. But as I was getting ready to drive over to the junior high school on the day of the gig, a disturbing thought struck me. The fellow who was supposed to arrive at the gig and have his kit set up and ready to go by 8:00 A.M. was a "party animal" who hadn't shown up on time to a rehearsal the entire time I'd been in the band. So I took a few extra minutes and loaded my drums in my car.

Sure enough, as showtime approached, the rest of the band had set up, but the other drummer was nowhere to be seen. I casually told the director that I just happened to bring my set because I had a gig the previous night. (I've never seen such a look of relief on a man's face.) I got to play the whole gig (the first time I'd ever been allowed to do so), and even with my limited skills I covered the parts quite well. Both the director and I knew that I didn't have the flashy technique of the other guys, yet within a couple of months he got tired of the "cool" fellows and kicked them out of the band, making me the only drummer. As a result, I was able to gain much more playing experience, and my skills improved tremendously.

The lesson here is that sometimes what you lack in experience and technique can be made up for in reliability and integrity. And as you get the gigs, you will *acquire* the experience and improve your skills. A "cool" attitude, however, seldom inclines serious musicians to want to work with you, or encourages anyone in charge to give you that first "break."

Fallacy #8: A Drummer Is Only A Success If He Or She Becomes A "Star"

With all the emphasis these days on "making it" in the music industry, this is a hard topic to discuss with many aspiring young drummers. But the hard truth is, if a drummer's primary interest is in becoming a millionaire or getting on MTV, chances are he or she is in for some hard disappointments. You must reconcile yourself to the fact that it's extremely possible to work very hard, dedicate your life to music, and still not become a media superstar. It takes a lot more than talent and hard work; it takes an enormous amount of luck as well.

I wouldn't want any young drummers to take this to mean that you shouldn't work hard toward your dreams. I only caution you not to let dreaming ruin your enjoyment of what you already have: your current drumming talents.

A lot of this has to do with the way an individual defines "success." In reality, if you in any way play and/or teach music, either professionally or semi-professionally, you've beaten the odds—because there's a lot of competition in the music business, and few gigs. To be a real drummer, and find a lasting success, drumming needs to be something you'd do even if there were no possible way to earn money from it. It should be something you *have* to do, whether or not you ever earn a dime. With this attitude, you've already "made it" before you even pick up your sticks.

Fallacy #9: Any One Article Can Tell You All The Fallacies

There are plenty more. Many of them are offshoots of those listed here. The most important way to avoid fallacious thinking as a drummer is to continue to grow as a musician. Be willing to learn. Always put the music before anything else—before "image," before ego—and you're sure to earn the greatest prize a drummer could want: the respect of your fellow musicians.

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Oficina De Percossao Do Recife, Brazil

This past March a unique percussion festival was held in Recife, the capital of the northeast Brazilian state of Pernambuco. The festival lasted for a full week and featured more than a dozen local folkloric and "classical" percussion ensembles, bands, and solo artists. Also featured were five internationally known drumset performers. Events included rich and varied folkloric performances of the region's Maracatu ensembles. Maracatu, found primarily in Recife and surrounding communities, is a strong mix of the various cultural influences of northern Brazil, namely African, Native Indian, and European.

Among the invited drumset artists was **Robertinho Silva.** Silva has worked with the great Brazilian artist Milton Nascimento for twenty-five years. His performance on Wayne Shorter's 1975 release *Native Dancer* brought him to the attention of the American jazz audience. Many jazz performers were impressed with Robertinho's skills, which are showcased on his American CD release, *Speak No Evil.* He impressed the festival audience with his awesome command of drum and percussion technique.

Flavio Pimenta, influenced by rock drummers like Keith Moon and John Bonham as well as the great Brazilian drummers, performed more in a rock vein than a Latin one. Many drummers outside Brazil might think that samba and bossa nova are all that is played there. Mr. Pimenta's power and double-bass-drum chops would quickly change their minds. Flavio performs in and around Sao Paolo, Brazil, where he also runs a successful drum school.

Drummers from North America were performer/writer **Chris Adams** (known for her work with Gary Chester, among others), **Peter Magadini** (dean of polyrhythms and jazz drummer extraordinaire), and yours truly (who was there to demonstrate Cuban and Brazilian rhythms on drumset, but wound up studying and learning more than I taught). Each of us was presented to the audiences in Recife by means of a performance with local musicians. We each also performed in a workshop setting. The people of Recife poured out their warmth and their music to all of us Norte Americanos, and we all came away longing to return.

The entire festival was the brainchild of Giovanni Papaleo, who coordinated all aspects of the event almost single-handedly. Mr. Papaleo is to be commended for bringing this first-of-its-kind festival to Recife and for bringing in the drumset performers from North and South America. Plans for a repeat festival next year are under way.

• ***Chuck Silverman***

GMS Sweepstakes Winner

Joseph Lee of Breezy Point, New York is the winner of the GMS *CL Series* drumkit offered in MD's May giveaway. His card was drawn from among the *thousands* sent in to MD's offices. Congratulations to Joseph from GMS and *Modern Drummer.*

DW Expands Sponsorship Of Play It Straight Campaign

Drum Workshop, Inc. is expanding its role as the corporate sponsor of the drum industry's ongoing *Play It Straight* anti-substance abuse ad campaign. The company has agreed to fund the production of additional advertising because, according to DW president Don Lombardi, "We are committed to promoting the message that drums and drumming are positive life choices, while drugs and alcohol are not. We look forward to the continued support and goodwill that the *Play It Straight* program has already received from the entire drumming community—including manufacturers, dealers, distributors, and publications, as well as drummers throughout the world."

In addition to new ads, the campaign is organizing a day-long drum event to be held in Los Angeles during International Drum Month this coming November. The event will feature several major drum artists. For more information on *Play It Straight* materials and activities, contact **Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030, tel:** (805) **485-6999, fax: (805) 485-1334.**

Indy Quickies

LP Music Group has announced the hiring of **Kenneth H. Ballantyne** (below) as president and CEO. LP founder **Martin Cohen** will continue to lead the company as chairman of the board of directors.

Pro-Mark's Not Yet Famous Drummer campaign is open to drummers outside the U.S. Applicants may use the form found in copies of MD (or a photocopy), or may write to Pro-Mark (10707 Craighead Dr., Houston, TX 77025-5899) for an application form.

Thoroughbred Music recently sponsored a "Spring Break Bash" with personal appearances by Aerosmith's **Joey Kramer** (bottom left) at all three of the store's Florida locations.

Pearl's marching percussion division was proud to sponsor the WGI National Indoor Percussion Championships (Dayton, Ohio, April 7-8, featuring over

forty drum lines from across the country) and the American Drum Line Association Championships (Orange, California, May 13, featuring sixty-five drum lines from southern and central California).

Chad and his "Telly"

DCI Music Video was recently awarded a "Telly" (given in recognition of outstanding achievement in non-network cable and video programs) for its "colorful, fast-paced, irreverent, and funny" *Red Hot Rhythm Method* instructional video featuring Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith. The tape was chosen from among nearly 8,000 entries.

Endorser News

New Mapex endorsers include **Valerie Agnew** (Seven Year Bitch) and **Dave Rees** (SNFU).

Tony Morales (Rippingtons), **Frank Colon** (Manhattan Transfer, Harry Belafonte), and **Bashiri Johnson** are using K&K trigger equipment and drum and cymbal microphones.

Marching Percussion stars **Hip Pickles** have joined Pearl's marching percussion endorsement roster.

New Rhythm Tech artists include **Carmine Appice, Prairie Prince** (Tubes), **John Kelly** (Type O Negative), **Chuck Biirgi** (Blue Oyster Cult), **Albert Bouchard** (Brain Surgeons), **Charles Miller** (Dr. John), **Todd Turkisher** (David Byrne), **Terri Lyne Carrington** (Herbie Hancock), **Brian Zsupnic** (Boz Scaggs), **Gary Bruzzese** (Glen Campbell), **Tony Allen** (Kid Creole & the Coconuts), **Gregory Hutchinson** (Roy Hargrove), **Janelle Burdell** (D'Cuckoo), **David Lyndon Huff** (Giant), **Will Henderson** (Silver Dollar City), **David Rosenberg** (studio), **Steve Singer** (Lucia), and **Allan Murray** (Magic Of Orlando).

Now using Vater drumsticks are **Mark Zonder** (Fates Warning), **Rafael Gayol** (Charlie Sexton), **Deen Castronovo** (Ozzy Osbourne), **Scotty Hawkins** (Reba Mclntire), **Del Gray** (Little Texas), **Mick Brown** (Dokken), **Sean Kinney** (Alice In Chains), **Van Romaine** (Steve Morse), **Gali Sanchez** (independent), and **Barry "Frosty" Smith** (Chris Duarte).

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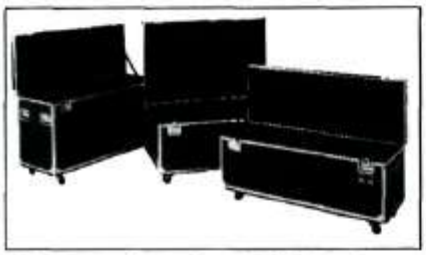

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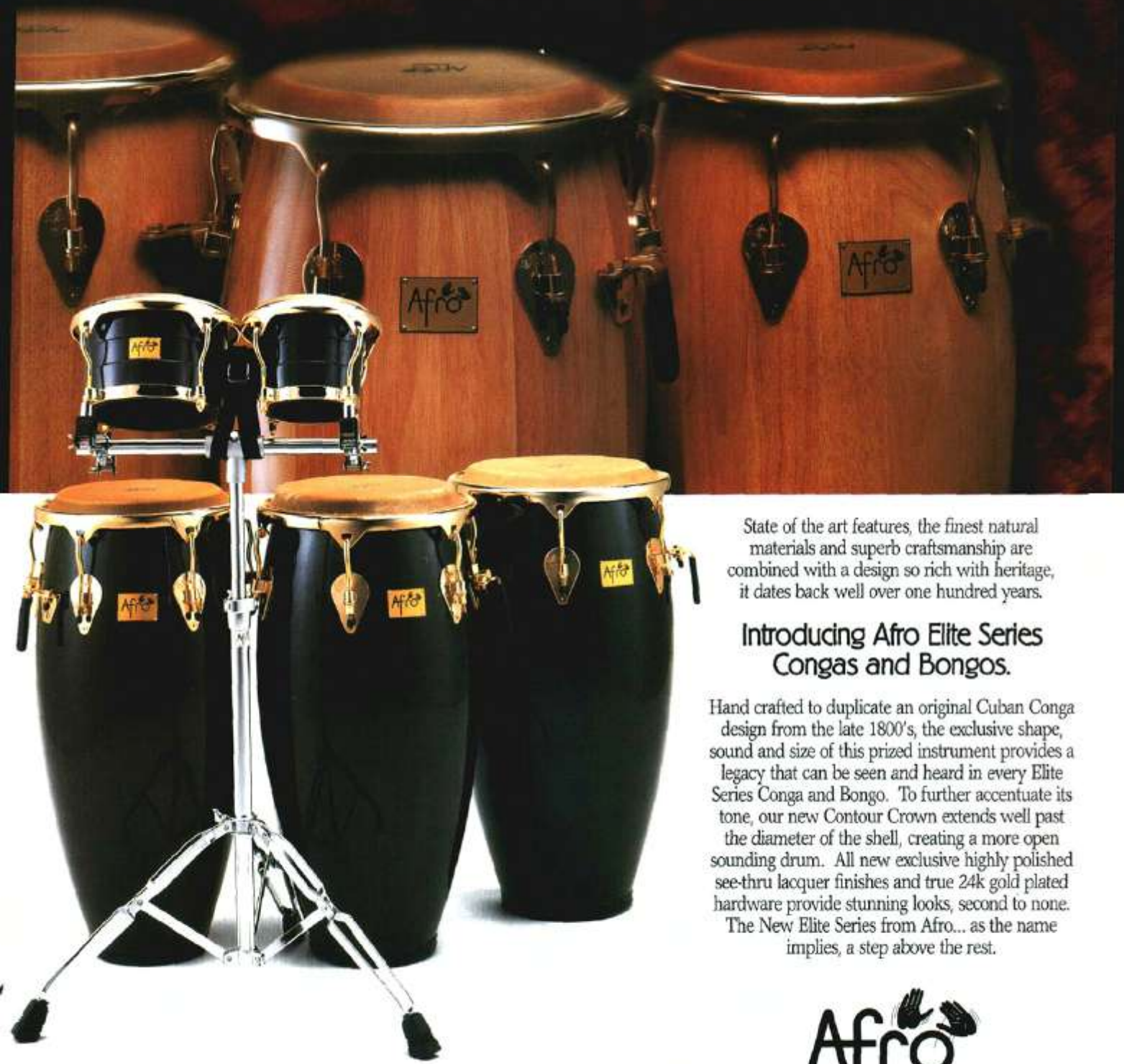

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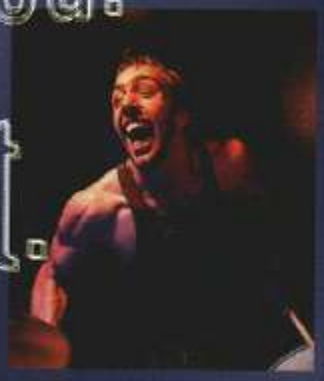

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